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#KLRBN

NO.67

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WHITE PLAINS
ROAD

E 222 ST

ALL'S QUIET ON WACKIES CORNER.
IMAGE MICHAEL SCHMELLING



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ED'S RANT



XLR8R's new military leader, Larry Lovebone, surveys the kingdom after the coup: "Rough!"

TEN YEARS OF SOLO ATTITUDE

In the beginning there was what? Music? A movement? Substance *and* substances? Sure was. That was a really good time, back then. And now I scratch my head and think, "Give me another 10 years and I'll be saying the same thing about today!" Yes, and yes again—if you've ever wondered what it's like running a magazine for a decade, well it's pretty super-fantastic most of the time. Even yesterday was great. (However, the day before yesterday sucked.)

So, instead of looking back and reminiscing about the long road and the hard journey, I am going to step into the future and reveal to you *XLR8R's* future landmarks over the next 10 years to come.

2004: *XLR8R* is first to document the self-destruction of trance music. Apparently, obvious melodies and overindulgence in cheesy vocals, drum rolls and breakdowns caused mental and physical damage to the core fanbase of this flimsy trend.

2005: *XLR8R* is first to document the arrival of a new underground genre named "nasty-beatz," coming out of the impoverished streets of urban America. Obvious melodies and overindulgence in cheesy vocals, drum rolls and breakdowns are the signatures of this music, and are cool all over again.

2006: The year of the micro-club movement. Forget massives and super-clubs—the trend moves toward three-ten-person parties or "tinies," signified by very minimal sound and lighting systems, absolutely no-name DJs, and not very goodlooking people.

2007: *XLR8R's* publisher (me) moves offices to a rural village in Hawaii, beach-side. A new trend in the experimental "Jawaian" music is first revealed in our pages.

2008: It's finally not cool to be a graff artist anymore. The trendy visual art vacuum is filled by civilly obedient artwork, such as street-corner miming and macramé parties. We can't get enough of it.

2009: American government is overthrown by Jamaica. The *XLR8R* staff rejoices, as they are now the brethren of King Tubby. The national anthem is changed to "Under Mi Sensi."

2010: No more innocent trees are killed in the manufacturing of magazines, and *XLR8R* is no exception. Through the modern miracle of portable electronics, *XLR8R* goes "virtual" and features all-nude *Men of XLR8R* webpage.

2011: The staff is replaced by robots. Far easier to train and discipline, and they don't come in hungover after boozing all night.

2012: Mars is colonized. Office of *XLR8R* opens, but is disrupted by a mutant uprising in the mining sector. An issue comes out late for the first time in history.

2013: In the words of Mick Jagger, "What a drag it is getting old." Time to pull the plug on this overgrown rave zine!

There you have it, the next ten years. But for this year, look out for *XLR8R's* "Living Magazine" exhibition, which will be roving the country at the end of the summer in conjunction with our good pals over at Adidas. You'll see live interviews, photos, artwork and all sorts of bits and bobs from the *XLR8R* world, both past and present. In addition to this massive undertaking, we are producing a limited run of *XLR8R* 10-year anniversary books that will be available only at these events and through special promotions. We're doing it up, properly. Keep it tuned.

Andrew Smith

// GRANDMASTER FLASH

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Hometown: Bronx, New York. Gold and platinum artist. Credited as being the first DJ to make turntables an instrument as well as revolutionizing music with his "Quick Mix Theory." A combination of back-spinning, phasing, double backing and cutting between turntables (also known as "Scratching").

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ON THE COVER: Autechre photographed by David Axelbank

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- 26th April, LA, Spundae, Circus.
- 2nd May, Calgary, The Warehouse.
- 03rd May, Baltimore, Trust.
- 09th May, Toronto, System.
- 10th May, Montreal, Aria.



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CONTRIBUTORS 05.03

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DAVID AXELBANK

Britain-born, but East Coast-raised, David Axelbank currently lives in London, where he intends to stay until George W. Bush is deposed from the throne. David is a Leo with Scorpio rising and a Scorpio moon and he shares a birthday with the likes of Madonna, T.E. Lawrence and Charles Bukowski. He likes to think of himself as one of the friendliest people you'll ever meet, but also has a major dark

side. In addition to *XLR8R*, his work has appeared in *Jane*, *URB* and *Time Out*, and his images are in the archive of PYMCA (www.pymca.net).



ROSS HOGG

Ross Hogg (aka Duppy Ranks) entered the realm of hip-hop in 1983 by B-boying unsuccessfully in his native Texas. After a few corny freestyles in high school, he started MCing in earnest in 1992 and has been DJing for several years now as well. The majority of his time is spent running bashment and foundation riddims, dropping hip-hop bangers, judging Zebra Records' DJ battles,

and putting together a capella remixes which he insists on calling "Hoggapellas" (please humor him). He's an Aries with Aries rising (more fire) and has game in nine languages (if you count patois). He's also great with parents and small children.



PAUL SULLIVAN

London-based writer/photographer Paul Sullivan's primary passions are music, travel and culture. When not toiling away for *XLR8R*, his articles and photographs have appeared in *The Independent*, *The Wire*, *The Face*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Sleazation*, *Muzik*, *DJ*, *Hip Hop Connection* and *Knowledge*. His work has taken him all over the world, covering music scenes and cultural

movements in South Africa, Iceland, Cuba, Brazil, New Zealand, and Australia. His first book, *Waking Up In Iceland*, is out now via Sanctuary Publishing UK (check www.paul-sullivan.com). He is partial to dunking the occasional digestive biscuit in his tea.



JON WELDON

From Brixton to West Oakland—and now to Crown Heights, Brooklyn—Jon Weldon has finally shed his small-town Southern boy complex. In fact, he's now proud to be a small-town Southern boy. Indeed, while all those other places got good beats, nothing is as good as Southern dirt. When he's not getting crunk or cookin' grits, Jon makes a living in substitute teaching and writing.



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LETTERS

All letters printed "as is."

So... according to KRS-One, inciting the hatred of not only Islamic extremists, but also getting the entire rest of the world extremely pissed off towards America in general by going to war with Iraq is actually smart foreign policy?

Excuse me, Mr. Foreign Diplomacy Expert, but I don't seem to remember the point at which Hussein said he was going to nuke our asses. So if I'm not mistaken, Dubya actually started this entire mess with his Axis-of-Evil-finger-pointing bullshit. I would not call that self-defense or being forced into military action.

If this war is part of his plan to "eradicate evil" and weapons of mass destruction, why are we "negotiating" with the much scarier North Korean leadership who have bought weapons technology from the US and many Allies.

Could oil have something to do with this war? Could the fact that Bush and Cheney are linked with oil and power companies have something to do with this? Could the fact that the defense and aerospace industry (also big ol' chums of Bush and Cheney) will get a big boost if we go to war be a factor? Hmmmmmm...

And if the White House is so opposed to the leadership of Iraq, why has the US government increased the orders of Iraqi oil in the last few weeks since the drums of war have gotten louder?

From the looks of it, seems that KRS has been getting his world view formed by all those really "insightful" USA Today Iraq conflict articles, so of course he thinks Dubya is doin' a good job. Hell, things couldn't be better down on the farm...

Also KRS's suggestion that Americans back Bush's wild frontierisms in exchange for governmental support of grassroots issues is nothing short of a Faustian pact and complete insanity. The only thing Americans would get in return for supporting this war would be world-wide, rampant anti-Americanism and a fresh new generation of terrorists willing to send this country into oblivion. And guess what? The so-called leadership of this country would not bear the brunt of this, so it would be us, the great unwashed, unemployed and frankly frightened masses.

Don't get me wrong: I too would like to see the world free of the likes of bastards like Saddam Hussein, but if a perfect world is what we're after, why not start at home? If you ask me, the world would be a much safer place without power mad crackers like Bush and Cheney.

For a self-proclaimed poet/activist/informer of the masses, KRS-One's world-view is as myopic and pig-nignorant as that of the bozo he defends so proudly. KRS, I'd urge you to take the timeless advice of Chuck D and believe the hype.

J. Verdin
Los Angeles

Yo, artist activists? What kinda shit you smokin' son? KRS1 is whack to begin with, but "I think George Bush is really great"? Nigga please. Yeah, he gives a LOT back to the community, like ignorance. And on page 36 what kind of "dissent" is created when Berkeley fools are wearing Nike, as well as your mag taking its blood money.

Kisses
Da Mook

You want to know what I'm thinking?. Well, I'm on the streets, but my rig is secure. Never sell, no matter what. Life can be very difficult. Oh yeah, sir, you need to pack all your shit and get the fuck out of here in, like, three days. Well, I had a solid year of making tracks and working on recording methodologies. Made some big leaps, yet still have a bunch of work. I knew reality would bite, and bite hard it did, yet I had to go for it. I love house and tekno. I love it to death. Love, Music, and Dance, Adnonamous Prime

Any chance of seeing a full feature on Scott Herren (aka Prefuse 73/Savath + Savalas) any time soon? He's been killin' it for the past year and a half producing and re-working joints for the likes of Mos Def + Diverse, Trans Am, Dabrye, Via Tania, Miho Hatori and Daedelus, not to mention the classic work thrown down on 2001's *Vocal Studies & Uprock Narratives* and last year's stellar *92 vs. 02 Collection*. With his Eastern Developments label dropping quality product left and right and a new Prefuse full-length due in a few months I figure this cat is well worth the recognition.
Peace.
Drew

I'm a deployed soldier in the middle of the desert. I haven't been able to read any of your issues for three months. I really enjoy your magazine and the articles. I live hip-hop, and listen to jazz, funk, D & B, House, and anything that tickles my toes. I just wanted to say thanks for pushing out a mag that actually appeals to my musical tastes. Since I am deployed and haven't been able to really keep up to the latest releases in the underground musical scene, I have ordered super juicy hip-hop from sites off the Internet to keep my mind off the poverty and war I have seen through-out my place of duty. I have found a new appreciation for the little things I have; for example, being able to physically go out and purchase your mag. Well, take care of the States while we soldiers are out here fighting this war.
Ronald J Desjardins Jr

ISSUE 66 CORRECTIONS

Nago Richard's last name was incorrectly spelled Richards in the last issue. Richardis, who also works as Nonconceptual, is now an XLR8R staff illustrator.
We incorrectly spelled NAMM.
The Militia EP is on Charge Recordings, not Cargo.

BITTER BASTARD

Bitter Bastard's 15 Ways To Make It As a Garage Band

It's impossible to make any money doing electronic music now. Ask anyone. What the kids want these days are skinny ties, loud guitars and tight, scrotum-baring Diesels to replace the fuzzy JNCOs of two years ago. So you better get cracking on this list of prerequisites. Our urchins on the street tell us that goth will be back in style faster than you can say, "Siouxsie."

Someone needs a **trust fund** or a "mutually beneficial" relationship with an older man. How else to pay for a practice space?

Buy a **Flowbee**. It gives your hair that look that says, "happy accident."

Find a **denim sponsor**. They wear in your jeans, so you don't have to.

One member needs a **fashion mullet**.

Make friends with the **photo assistants** at *Interview*.

Have at least one (but not more than one) member who is both **portly and reserved**, preferably the bass player.

Must have done **mandatory slumming** as wage slave (suitable locations include McDonald's, shampoo boy at hair salon or counter person at the Coconuts chain of record stores).

Own at least one leather jacket with a **"personality hole"** (i.e. an unlikely, exaggerated tear that will make you look more "street").

One member of the band must **DJ at a small dive bar**, playing a mix of garage rock, Krautrock and Italo-disco. Liquid Liquid and ESG records are good to have in reserve.

If you're not from New York or Scandanavia, get a **fake passport**.

Build a **private pool of piranhas** to wade in to get that ripped jean effect.

Live in Williamsburg, or just **rent a P.O. Box** there.

Possess a non-ironic attachment to the **Rolling Stones**.

Possess an ironic attachment to **trucker hats**.

Don't give up your day job.

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XLR8R'S 55 WAYS TO LOOK FINE CONTEST

You lucky bitch. For spring you're getting a good outfit and cool music. You will have no excuse for not getting laid ever again (except your breath stank). 55DSL creates all the cool stuff you want to wear but can never find: vintage-looking old-man golf pants and tracksuit bottoms that hang properly, perfectly distressed tees, wicked zip-up sweatshirts and cute baseball jackets. To go with the booty call-inspiring clothes, Wackies (read all about 'em on page 56) is giving away the *Wackies Sampler, Vol. 1*, which is full of classic reggae and lovers rock jams that will help you seduce that willing hipster once you get them home. To win, you just have to send us the top three artists you would like to see in XLR8R who haven't been covered in the last five issues. Winners will be chosen randomly.



Grand Prize Winner: 2 Full Outfits from 55DSL

Five Runners-Up: 2 T-Shirts from 55 DSL and the *Wackies Sampler, Vol. 1* on CD

Send your answers by mail to: XLR8R's 55 Ways to Look Fine Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117; or enter online at www.xlr8r.com. Include your name, return address, and email address when you enter. Entries must be received by June 15, 2003.

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Spacek (from left): Edmund Cavill, Steve Spacek and Morgan Zarate

SOUTH LONDON TRIO DRAGS SOUL MUSIC INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. LOVEMAKING MAY NEVER BE THE SAME.

Steve Spacek might be a great singer, but you wouldn't know it by listening to *Vintage Hi-Tech*, the sophomore LP from the Londoner's eponymous trio. On the new record, the frontman does little but warble and whisper, his voice shrouded by effects and mired in a pool of glutinous nu-soul textures.

Criticized by some for hiding his voice behind a digital smokescreen, Spacek responds defiantly to the suggestion that he's no classic soul man. "Music shouldn't be about proving yourself," he counters. "It's about displaying your heart and sharing something. Why should I do big vocals if I don't want to? Aretha did that. Stevie did that.

That's already been done, and it's been done so well that I don't need to go there. Period."

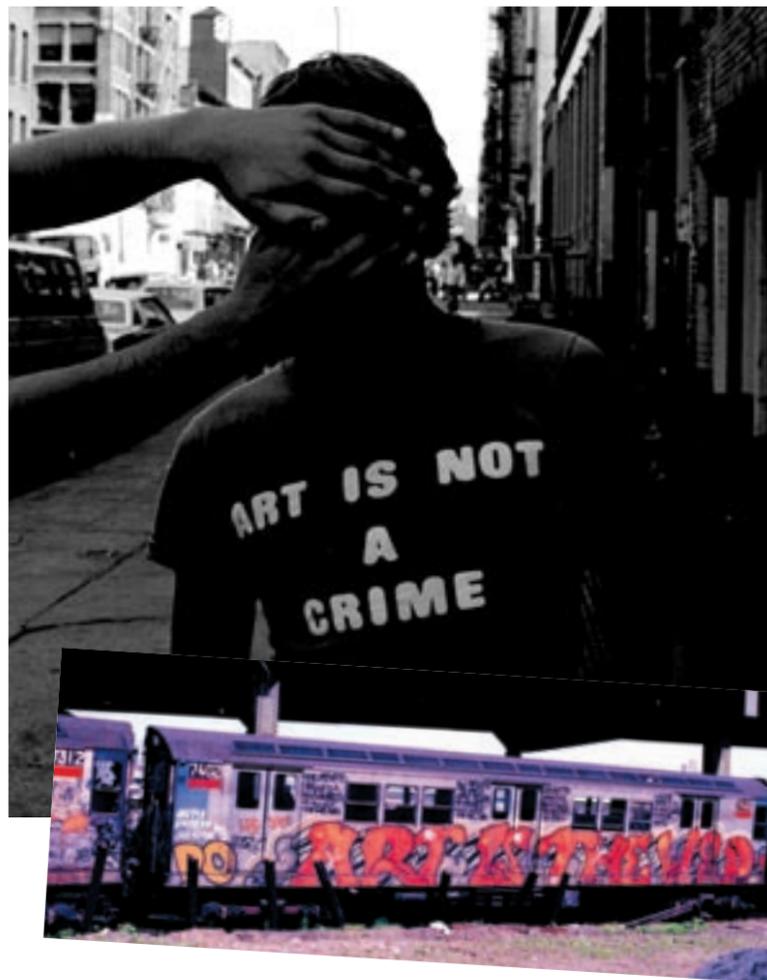
Sheesh. So much for friendly conversation. Still, Spacek seems genuinely excited by his group's ability to make, in his words, "original soul music—whatever that means." In this case, it means stitching classic R&B melodies, slightly roughed up by some Jay Dee-style hip-hop beats, into the folds of a delicate electronic tapestry. On *Vintage's* spectacular "Starz," Spacek speaks softly against a backdrop of taut stutter-step rhythms and sparse, chiming atmospheric, a curious amalgam of the saccharine and the austere. Indeed, the trio's uniquely minimalist aesthetic introduces yet another new term into the postmodern lexicon: microscopic soul.

"There used to be five members in the group," explains producer Morgan Zarate.

"But that was way too schizophrenic. There were too many voices speaking at the same time. Now, in the process of creating, we're constantly stripping things away. We hone everything down, and give each sound ample breathing room."

Now comprised of Spacek, Zarate and guitarist Edmund Cavill, the South London outfit is primed to invade the bedrooms of nu-soul lovers on both sides of the Atlantic. Given the band's facility with sultry sounds, has Spacek ever done the nasty with his own music as background? "Yeah, of course I have," he maintains. "And friends of mine are always saying, 'Hey, rude boy! I had your album on and I got freaky with my lady! I'm like, 'Wicked! Make babies to our music.'"

Vintage Hi-Tech is out now on !K7 Records. www.spacek.co.uk



PIECE BY PIECE Often mythologized, and with good reason, Henry Chalfant's seminal 1983 film *Style Wars* (made with Tony Silver) is considered the Holy Grail of hip-hop movies. Despite the inherent illegality of its subject matter, it somehow seems pure, not to mention essential, especially considering how big the cultural phenomenon of graffiti would later become. The 70-minute documentary spray paints a 3-D outline of inner city youth at their most rebellious, active and creative. Entire trains are covered top to bottom, inside and out. Gravity-defying, aerodynamic dance moves are invented. Politicians hate it, and parents just don't understand—but the kids have the juice. As the *Style Wars 20th anniversary DVD reissue* (\$27.95; Plexifilm) reveals, "style wars" doesn't necessarily refer to competition between the protagonists, but battles between B-boys and symbols of authority. *Eric K. Arnold*

XLR8R: What inspired you to start taking pictures of this stuff and filming it?

Henry Chalfant: Graffiti itself was amazing in the early '70s. It was unprecedented. Nothing like that had ever been seen, [with] kids picking up spray cans and painting trains. I watched it grow from tags on the trains to people doing pieces. I was amazed, so I started taking pictures just to preserve it and to show people what was going on. Tony Silver, a documentary filmmaker, came along with a proposal and said, "Let's do a film!" That's how it got started.

XLR8R: At the time, did you have any idea how large hip-hop would get?

HC: We had no idea. We didn't look ahead 20 years, that's for sure. We were eager to reveal to the world what was going on at that time. I don't think we even gave it a thought in terms of how long it would go.

XLR8R: Who made the biggest impression on you out of all the characters?

HC: For sure, someone like SKEME, who was so active at the time and came out of the blue and started taking over the trains in a very short period of time. SEEN was a phenomenon. KASE was a phenomenon. [With] the force of his personality and the persona he projected, I don't think I'd ever met anyone like him before.

XLR8R: What do you think *Style Wars*'s legacy will be?

HC: *Style Wars*'s legacy will evoke NYC in the early '80s, an extraordinary time when urban kids more or less were left to their own devices. In a situation of lack of attention from the society around them, they were able to create whole worlds for themselves and invent new forms of expression. *Style Wars* is probably the only real document of that period. And it was a period in transition. The minute we started looking at it and filming it, everything changed.

www.stylewars.com

SEX SONICS

Echoing Matmos's conversion of plastic surgery samples into music, Aaron Funk (Venetian Snares) and partner Rachael Kozak (Hecate) captured the sounds of themselves indulging in anal and oral sex, bondage, caning, spanking and microphone insertion on MiniDisc while on tour together in Europe. The resultant gulps and gasps, groans and slaps, squelches and farts were subsequently crafted into *Nymphomatriach* (out this month on the aptly-named Hymen Records), an album of eerie and salacious electronics.

"It started off as private recordings of our sex acts. It was a record of some very good memories," reveals Kozak of *Nymphomatriach*'s conception. "The actual programming and editing of the material was more of an artistic challenge—to see if we could make every single sound on the album out of the sounds we created." Breathing and moaning were converted into choirs and strings, while slaps became percussion. "I received a lot of corporal punishment, which provided a lot of the snares and hits," admits Kozak. "But my personal favorite was the sound of Aaron's zipper coming down."

Intriguingly, Kozak—whose recording moniker is appropriated from an ancient fertility goddess—admits that the final recording isn't necessarily arousing in itself. "It wasn't made to be overtly erotic," she says. "Some people find it quite scary, actually. Sex is a strictly personal thing—what one person finds arousing, another will find debauched." Will there be a video? "Sure, I wouldn't mind tying up a few girls and whipping them in time to our music," says Kozak. But was it fun? "Yes." *David Hemingway*

www.klangstabil.com/hymen



Hecate (left) and Venetian Snares

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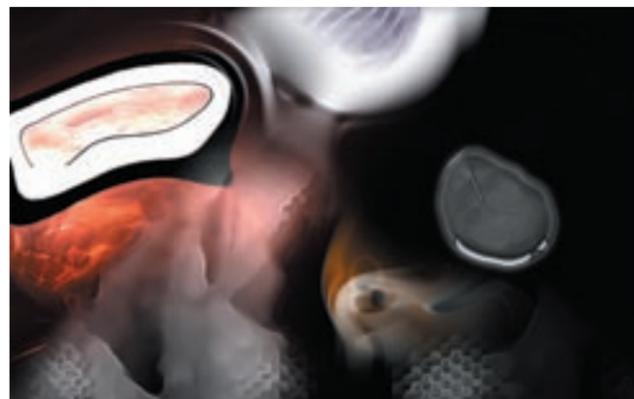
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FOWL PLAY

As anyone who's ever stood under a telephone pole can attest, birds can be the harshest critics. Armed with their own unique brand of paint, they roam the world, letting you know *exactly* what they think of our monuments, your new suit, or someone's freshly scrubbed SUV. Walking between the droppings is a friend of the fowl, LA artist Scott 'Hersk' Herskovitz. His avian-centric drawings are pleasing if not downright hypnotic, unwinding as geometric patterns from a seemingly endless roll of wallpaper. He's lent his touch to the pages of *Arkitip* and *Anthem*, designed limited-edition wristbands for Paul Frank, and his decorated bust sculptures have toured the country as part of Mod-Arts *Keep a Breast* show. His latest creations (seen here) are, fittingly enough, for the birds. One-of-a-kind custom-painted birdhouses are priced at a reasonable \$100, so there's no reason not to pick up one for both yourself *and* your fine feathered friend. *David J Weissberg*
www.hersk.com



MAD SLINKY "That's, uh, abstract," says a friend observing Jeffers Egan and Jake Mandell's DVD "experience" *Slither* (\$19; K20 Records). In *Slither*, five short animations by Egan are accompanied by music in 5.1 surround sound by Jake Mandell, although the audio and the visual components would be fascinating on their own. Straying from his more recent techno forays, Mandell's compositions are spacious agglomerations of sound, ranging from slivers of chords to random squawks and clanks; occasionally, these sounds assemble into an aggressive beat, as happens nine minutes into the opening



piece, "Crusty Effluvia." Egan's animations are ultra-smooth digital creations that constantly twist and mutate. His combination of slowly evolving pieces interspersed with quick cuts owes something to Stan Brakhage, but his riotous colors and organic shapes recall Miro's surrealism. All of this goes out the window, though, when you turn down the lights and allow Egan and Mandell's images and sound direct access to your medulla, rendering cognitive judgment and linguistic reactions irrelevant. *Rob Geary*
www.k20-records.com



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Store: Huf
Location: 808 Sutter St, San Francisco, California
Established: Since August 2002
Owners: Keith and Anne Hufnagel
Brands: Nike, Adidas, Supreme, Alife, Snafu, Annex
Philosophy: To bring in cool, new product from different countries that people in San Francisco can't get elsewhere.
Interesting store incident: You know those ladies that pick cans out of the garbage cans with a wire hanger? One of them came in and wanted two hats that said "Skate or Die" and "Expensive Shit" on them. But she didn't seem to understand prices. Finally, Anne had to count on her fingers up to 24 for one hat and up to 40 for the other hat. Then she just laughed and laughed.
www.hufsf.com



Store: Vacant
Location: Traveling store hitting major cities including Las Vegas, London, LA, Milan, Shanghai, and Portland
Established: First stop was NYC in February 2003
Owner: Russell Miller
Brands: Michael Lau v. Nike Fiberops Boy D, Electronic Sheep clothing, BPM v. Puma Ltd. Ed. Shoes, Paintura Project soccer balls
Philosophy: Stocking exclusive products not available elsewhere in the city we're launching in, with events and exhibitions that tie in. We aim to create a unique environment and bring some excitement to retail.
Interesting store incident: Robin Williams purchasing a Mad Anthony shirt, two Paintura balls, a Parkwalk t-shirt from London and two pairs of Keanan Duffy Reebok Pump shoes.
www.govacant.com



Store: Someday
Location: 20 Chatham St, Prahran, Melbourne, Australia
Established: 2003
Owners: Perks and Mini
Brands: Silas, PAM, Amos and Medicom Toys, Tonite and Bernhard Wilhelm
Ideal customer: People who are genuinely into what we sell—not into re-selling it on Ebay!
Interesting store incident: One day a crazy lady came in and had a bipolar conversation (she spoke in a manly gruff voice) with the Bearded Prophet, a Silas toy, and then she announced to the whole shop that her other personality and the Bearded Prophet could be friends.

WRECKIN' SHOP

Good love is hard to find, and so are limited-edition items that will impress all your friends. Brag-worthy clothes, figurines, soccer balls and more are available at these noteworthy shops.



Store: Carve
Location: 305 N. Harbor Blvd. #107, Fullerton, CA
Established: 2000
Owner: Sonia Dal Santo
Brands: Silas, Nike, Levis Red, Adidas, Cutler & Gross
Ideal customer: People who know what we carry and understand our style.
Interesting store incident: We have been listed as a "surf shop" in the phone directory since we opened even though we inform them every year that we are a boutique. At least once a week, surfer guys come in and stand in the middle [of the shop] with their eyes wide open. Then they ask, with a question-mark face, "Do you guys carry wet suits?" We just laugh.



Store: The Reed Space
Location: 2151 Orchard St, New York
Established: Opened Dec 2002
Owner: Staple Design
Brands: Dunderdon, Charizmatik, Diffeducation, BackChannel
Company philosophy: A public art community center. Our customers so far have been local LES inhabitants. They are usually surprised to find that we're not assholes here.
Interesting store incident: Diane Von Furstenberg came in and bought two pieces of art. She tried to pay with a check and we said, "We can't accept checks." Then she proceeded to show us her deposit bank slip for \$40,000.00. I said, "Impressive. So will it be Visa or Mastercard?"
www.stapledesign.com



Store: Zoltar the Magnificent
Location: 33 Marshall St off Carnaby, SoHo, London
Established: July 2002
Owner: Dan Macmillan
Brands: Strictly Zoltar
Best sellers: Bondage trousers and school blazers
Interesting store incident: We have a bathroom that is covered floor to ceiling with pornography (with a dildo door handle) and sometimes we get people locking themselves in there for half an hour.
www.zoltarthemagnificent.com



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FLORIDA'S M3RCK LABEL MAKES BLEEPERS TO ROCK IN JEEPS.

"Every time I write a track, I am living on the edge," jokes Tim Koch (a.k.a. Thug). "I am risking my life to do music for M3rck." He is kidding, of course, but his point is valid; the Florida-based M3rck (say "merk") label puts itself on the line with every release. Label owner Gabe Koch seems to only release music from unknowns, and is responsible for tossing hordes of new talent—including Machine Drum, Proem, and recent signings Deceptikon and Adam Johnson—into the international electronic music pool. Some of M3rck's swimmers have made it into the deepest leagues of intelligent dance music, including Brothomstates and Kristuit Salu, who are now playing for UK label Warp Records.

M3rck's well-rounded roster ranges from esoteric hip-hop hybrids to straight-ahead techno rockers, making the label's sound hard to categorize. "I consider [our music to be] IDM," Koch says. "It's the easiest term to describe it. I have always looked at IDM as stuff that has elements of other genres but doesn't quite fit—it's fringe music." Not that categories necessarily matter at M3rck. "I think [Gabe] is a fan to the point of obsession first, and then a label head," says Proem, whose fractured symphonies reside on the imprint.

To give you an idea of where Koch's obsessions lie, check Proem's recent album, *Negativ*, a solitary affair of alienated, but not alienating, tunes that the artist describes as "a lot of melody with some weird drum sounds thrown in for good measure." On the sunnier side of the roster, Thug releases joy-

ful tracks that remind him "of the 'You Won!' screen from old 8-bit games"; he prides himself on creating "that feeling of crude square-wave melody that reassures you that life is worth living."

Somewhere in between Proem's work and Thug's play lies Roman Belousov (who records as Novel 23). He might be the dark horse of the pack, hearing "romantic melodies and electro rhythms" in his output, which he describes as "the music of a bored mind."

The M3rck name implies a mercurial or fluctuating variety of sounds, brought together by a dancefloor sensibility often missing from the more esoteric realms of electronic music. Koch prefers a simpler explanation. "The unifying factor of our music," he says, "is melody." }

www.m3rck.net



STREET TREATS



Skullz Press Oakland's Skullz Press keeps running with double entendre-filled filth. The most recent zine in the series, *Snot Hatch*, finds graffiti/tattoo artist Giant teaming up with Portland compatriot Joker. Black-and-white pieces, throw-ups and hand-styles are the theme of this short-but-sweet collaboration between the two fine-line daredevils. Particularly of interest is the artists' conversation in the back of the zine about the theory and implementation of this project, and the act of art-making in general. Other titles include *Pagina Vilot*, *Shim Rot*, *Dairy Hicks*, and *Funk Pucker*, a collabo with Dalek. Get yours while they're got. *TophOne* www.skullzpress.com



The Price of Getting Up How hard could it be to get three friends together to show their art, especially when they're three of the most visible and widely respected "street artists" in the world? Pretty hard, particularly when the NYC Vandal Squad is out to bust the trio for past violations. In *The Price of Getting Up* (coming soon on DVD), director John Carluccio (1997's *Battle Sounds*) dives head first into the strife surrounding Espo, Twist and Reas and the melee surrounding their groundbreaking *Street Market* show at Deitch Projects in 2000. Interviews, live art, and news footage illustrate the absurdity and beauty involved. First screened at the New York Underground Film Festival in March, the short will travel the globe as part of 2004's *Beautiful Losers* exhibition along with works by Spike Jonze, Mike Mills and Larry Clark. *TophOne* www.battlesounds.com

Paintura Pitch Project What's white, round, covered with interlocking pentagons and festooned with a giant superhero head? Give up? Duh, it's the limited edition soccer ball designed by Kostas for the Paintura Pitch project. Designed to give you something to rest on the mantelpiece in between your high school trophies and your bronzed copy of *FIFA Soccer 2003* for Playstation, Puma has released 12 soccer balls and jerseys given a makeover by artists including Will Barras, Mo' Wax's Ben Drury, Mr. Jago, and Swedish design team Var, among others. Each design is limited to a 150 run, and partial proceeds will go to buying sports equipment for underprivileged youth. In the US, you can score one at roving store Vacant. *Vivian Host* www.puma.com



PEEP GAME In the future, there won't be any more raves, only video arcades where you can get the same visual stimulation without pissing off parents or cops. Following on the heels of such addictive diversions as *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Parappa the Rapper* comes *Amplitude* (Sony/Playstation 2), where you get to step into the producer/remixer role. As a customized character called a "Freq," you control a rocket ship, shooting targets on a moving futuristic highway that represent different elements of a song, such as drums, bass, or synths. Once you've got them all down correctly, the entirety of one of the game's 20 tracks (by artists including Run DMC, Weezer, and Pink) will play. Levels go from mellow to insane, so even your most stoned friends can have fun, and at five stages per track—with a boss round at the end of each—it will be a while before you wear the game out. For the avid player, *Amplitude* offers the ability to remix songs using the individual parts and to play against others online. The best thing about *Amplitude*, though, is that it only takes eye-hand coordination and a tiny bit of rhythm to play, making it addictive even for even the most of hopeless of Playstation novices. *Vivian Host*



INFLUENCES: GREENS KEEPERS

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING.

Pilfering classic records for catchy loops is nothing new in dance music. But James Curd—frontman of Chicago's three-piece Greens Keepers collective—takes things back to the old, old-school when digging for his sounds: he finds his groove in the classic swing jazz and big band-era sounds of cats like Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Benny Goodman. "Chicago's got millions of record stores," Curd says, divulging his trade secrets. "Sometimes I'll go to a store, grab the whole jazz and swing era, and give the guy \$50 for it. I'll spend the whole day listening to them just to find one good thing."

Greens Keepers' stand-up bass licks, brassy horns and down-home guitar twanging fused with straight-up Chi-town house beats has spawned a fledgling new sub-genre: swing house. Curd's label G-Swing, run in conjunction with DJ Romain (head of Paris's Basenotic label, the imprint where Curd made his production debut), is at the forefront, releasing swing-influenced cuts by Mike Dixon, Dan X and the two label heads.

But don't expect to see Greens Keepers warming up for Big Bad Voodoo Daddy or the Squirrel Nut Zippers anytime soon. As their debut album, *The Ziggy Franklen Radio Show*, proves, the group can flex a number of musical styles, referencing everything from Zapp and P-Funk to '70s radio rock and jazzy house. Whatever the sound, Curd and his primary musical partners, multi-instrumentalists Nick Maurer and Mark Share, make music that oozes pleasure. "If it's not fun for us, we just kinda quit (and) move on to something else," says Curd. They're not just studio geeks, either; Greens Keepers Curd and Maurer are avid skateboarders, bowlers and golfers—hence the name.

Curd's been a fixture on the Chicago house scene for years, spinning alongside Windy City stalwarts like Diz, Derrick Carter, Heather and Gene Farris. The city's twisted sense of house music humor has left its dirty fingerprints all over another project Curd is reportedly involved in—the straight-outta-Alaska Igloo label, whose contributors have already worked over Talking Heads, The Cure, Missy Elliot and '80s throw-back Taco in a memorable series of party-pleasing mashups.

Despite a rapidly expanding DJ itinerary and a mixed CD due this summer for Paris's Respect Is Burning crew, Curd's biggest musical achievement so far has little to do with actual music. "The biggest accomplishment for me music-wise is that music has led me to be in contact with [pro skater-turned-musician] Tommy Guerrero," he says. "That was my man growing up!"

www.greenskeepersmusic.com

STEP TO THIS

Trends" twirls on its axis at the pace of an LA freeway at 5:00 pm, with an overturned big rig blocking the center divider. Most of the denizens of this inhospitable environment still wear Dunks; and, having exhausted every version of their 8-bit palette long ago, they are forced to use color combinations like "Summer Squash/Vermillion" and "Alhambra Sunset/Loquat." Other inhabitants can hardly recall the time when people *weren't* wearing Black Converse, which was sometime in long-long ago 2003 BV (Before-The-Vines).

Then came six, like Buck Rogers in a shoebox, to show these future people that their feet needn't feel so tired. *David J Weissberg*



Part-time Twist cronny and full-time member of the PVC crew, **Grey**, releases his shoe in conjunction with Trouble Merchandise. Strictly limited, it's emblazoned with his signature vandal graphic, which screams "Please beat me!" to airport security. www.troublemerchandise.com



A swift uppercut comes from Puma's **Shattenboxen** (which translates as boxing shoe, not bedpan). Our bet is that you'll take a fall in the first round to avoid getting them dirty. www.puma.com



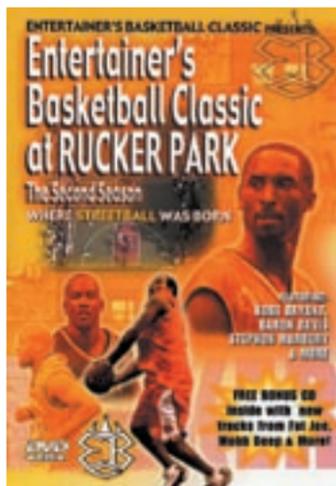
When you're grazing on the urban Serengeti, watch out for predators trying to pry these animal-print **Grasshoppers** off your feet. These retro '80s-styled high tops with Velcro ankle closure are not for the faint of foot. They also come in camouflage, Bengal tiger print, rasta suede, and a limited edition black garment leather model with sterling silver detailing. www.ipath.com



Reebok reissues its classic-but-maybe-still-too-far-ahead-of-their-time **Alien Stompers**, much to the delight of sci-fi nerds and Sigourney Weaver foot fetishists everywhere. www.reebok.co.jp



China, once infamous for its small footwear, has now made something even smaller and much less painful. **Sneakers Vision** is reproducing the classics: Rifts, Dunks and Attitudes, and, seen here, the Presto (right) and Pump Fury. They're for 1/6 scale dolls, the kind all those Lower East Side kiddies covet so much these days. www.xl-shop.com



RUCKER PARK RUCUS Sports-phobes breathe easy: *Entertainer's Basketball Classic at Rucker Park—The Second Season* DVD (\$19.99; Melee Entertainment) is a basketball documentary only insofar as it shows people dribbling, passing and dunking. The real focus, however, is on the Harlem street culture that supports and surrounds the infamous Rucker Park streetball tournament, which has not only cultivated ball players, but also MCs like the legendary Big L. If the background music had been produced by Kanye West, this could be a Cam'Ron video, as Harlem slang like "Holler at your boy-boy" and aggressive Noo Yawk attitudes abound. Consider this DVD the basketball version of a street-corner MC cipher: it's the art form stripped down to its core, and the big names still roll through and participate to gain cred and show skills. The result is a thoroughly entertaining viewing experience regardless of your views on basketball, streetball, or sports in general. *Pete Babb*

IN THE FUTURE: CRACK:W.A.R.



...the skies are burning pink, copulating orangutans swing from inert power lines, and herds of bloodied unicorns wander the crumbling and abandoned edifices of power. The war pigs are gone, replaced by joyous and oversexed peacocks and gazelles, and a cacophony of peace reigns over the ruins of great cities.



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* patent pending



Rogers Sisters (from left): Laura Rogers, Miyuki Furtado and Jennifer Rogers

**AUDIOFILE:
ROGERS SISTERS**

THESE BROOKLYN POST-PUNKS ARE OUT TO BE THE STARS OF A NEW RHYTHM NATION.

Brooklyn band the Rogers Sisters only does it if the feeling is right. The group—a garage band that wants to make you dance, dance, dance—came together when Detroit-bred sisters Laura and Jennifer Rogers were asked to play a Williamsburg house party. Feeling naked without a bass player, they turned to friend-of-a-friend Miyuki Furtado to fill in the blanks. One practice and several cover songs later (they played The Zombies, Joy Division, and Ike and Tina Turner), the trio knew that they were destined to be more than just a one-night stand.

Since hooking up in late 1999, the three have bred their own species of rock, incorporating elements of soul, funk, and '60s psychedelic garage with a deconstructed sensibility last seen in the post-punk era.

With their catchy theme-song drums, quirky melodies, and skanking basslines, the group has drawn repeated comparisons to the experimental pop of Talking Heads, Television, early B-52s, and even Missing Persons. More notably, Jennifer and Miyuki have developed a trademark vocal tic, trading off hiccuping and belting repetitive, seemingly nonsensical lyrics in a staccato style that makes the words percussive elements in and of themselves.

"We definitely are rhythm-oriented musicians," Jennifer says of the group's signature lyrical style. "When you use the same word over and over it's more like a drum beat." "When you listen to anything, from early gospel stuff up to Parliament Funkadelic, they just do these chants," concurs Miyuki, who writes many of the lyrics. "I've tried to simplify what I write instead of getting too wordy. I'll write lyrics and just go in with a pen and cross out words and phrases that

don't really apply. I'm trying to tell these mini-stories in detail using the least amount of words."

The piquant stories the Rogers Sisters have to tell can be found on their debut CD, *Purely Evil*, which they recorded in 36 hours. You won't find any power ballads on it, but you will find lots of numbers to go-go to, including "I'm A Ballerina" and "Calculator."

And if you go see the Rogers Sisters live, they'll expect you to shake, shake, shake it. "When people get really involved it makes us more excited to be playing," says Jennifer. "It's just kind of creates this circular energy pattern. When we feel like we're on display on a big, brightly lit stage, it's just not as satisfying." }

Purely Evil is out now on Troubleman Unlimited. Rogers Sisters also have a forthcoming 7" on the Rough Trade label. www.therogerssisters.com

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DA LICK

Dalek's signature Space Monkeys resemble at once both the deformed offspring of Mr. Burns from *The Simpsons* and a mutation of one of Kaws's twisted cartoon characters. They're always in motion, trailed by rays of light, empty speech bubbles and clouds of smoke as they float across canvases. Deceptively simple and graphic, Dalek's work is more than just graffiti-inspired pop art. Beneath the vivid imagery and lush coloring lies a twisted and admittedly ambiguous commentary on the paradoxically banal surrealism of everyday life.

In addition to his paintings, prints and digital images of the Space Monkeys, the first printed survey of his work includes dozens of photographs that show the Brooklyn-based artist to be a shrewd observer of his surroundings, as well as master of color and line. In both monochrome and hyper-saturated color photos, he shoots his friends fucking around, the murals they've painted, and grotesque, rotting animal corpses. As wildly eclectic as it all sounds, *Nickel Plated Angels* (softcover; Gingko Press) succeeds in integrating Dalek's surprisingly diverse body of work into a cohesive whole, united by an underlying subtext of entropy, a feeling that life is in a perpetual state of decay. *James Friedman*

www.gingkopress.com www.dalekart.com



HE'S LOST CONTROL With movies like *24 Hour Party People* and bands like The Interpol reviving interest in all things Joy Division, Vision On releases *They Walked in Line* (softcover; \$29.95, Vision On), a book of band photographs by Kevin Cummins that blurs the line between music, fashion, and sheer obsession.

Cummins delivers primarily austere black-and-white photos that show a band as serious and raw as their music would have you believe. A wan Ian Curtis looks perpetually haunted, whether hunched against the wall in a ramshackle practice space or entranced in the almost voodoo-like possession of his on-stage antics. A good portion of the book is devoted entirely to chronicling every twitch, gasp and stutter of Curtis's live performances. Up-and-coming bands can use this section as an instructional manual on how to captivate and utterly frighten audiences.

The shots also capture an emerging indie style, and foreshadow the disco-meets-goth sensibilities of New Order. A young, almost-elfin Bernard Sumner, showing the first traces of that pained look he always wears, sports a limp mustache, a skinny tie, and tight '70s jeans that make no secret of where the jewels are kept. Bassist Peter Hook, with his carefully placed sweatband, spray-painted muscle tee, and military-inspired utility guitar strap, rocks a deconstructed punk-meets-gay-leather-man look that would make Mount Sims sweat.

Whether your obsession with the band lies in their music, their message, or just their look, there's something for every Joy Division fan in these pages. *Vivian Host*

www.visiononpublishing.com

VEHICLE VANGUARDS

Street cred. Many big brands want it, very few are able to achieve it. You, as a reader of *XLR8R*, are the target: a person who dictates cool. We've seen successful re-entries into cool by Ocean Pacific (who served up a cocaine-embazoned cover of *Vice* magazine), solid dedication to cool by huge footwear floggers such as Nike and Adidas, and half-hearted attempts at cool, like Ford's second-rate Juan Atkins-powered campaign for the Focus. Toyota's limited edition Scion is the next product aiming for tastemaker approval. Can they do it?

When asked what he thought was wrong with corporate America's approach to youth marketing, Scion's National Brand Manager Brian Bolain stated that large companies have little discretion. "Let's be honest," he said. "The 'outdoorsy' thing has been done to death." Scion is veering in a different direction, ditching out on mainstream youth for the so-called "trend leaders," a group they've found that thrives on variety and newness and the latest Kubrick toys. Scion will be producing only a limited number of cars, much like they do in the trend-driven Japanese market. "Scion doesn't need to be for everybody," Bolain explains.

A few steps this campaign's taken in the right direction are: choosing edgy design firm Attik for their marketing campaign, making low-key appearances at music events, and creating street presence by having known artists such as David Choe, Dez Einswell, Revok and Saber paint Scion models live. Of course, nothing pushes the car more than the design itself. The Scion xA starts around \$13K and \$14K for the xB, and you can customize at the dealership with 38 accessories. *Julia Chan and Andrew Smith*

www.scion.com



Wierd Scion-ce: Scion's stock sound system (left); a custom graffiti paint job (above)

Julia Chan

Pioneer *sound.vision.soul*



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LONDON-BASED PACESETTERS RELEASE IN SOUNDS FROM FAR OUT.

Back in 1993, "nu-jazz" and "new Brazilian" didn't exist as rack space in your local record store. That didn't stop Joe Davis from wanting to make records to fill those gaps. After travelling to Rio to work with Marcos Valle and Azymuth, he envisioned a future where traditional Brazilian sounds were interpreted in a modern context. The trip inspired Davis to start the Far Out label and record the imprint's first album, *Friends From Rio*, which was released in 1995. A year later, Far Out released the first instalment of *Misturada*, the groundbreaking compilation series that has featured artists like Wax Doctor, Pressure Drop, and Nobukazu Takemura reworking time-honored sounds into futuristic dance-floor tracks. Here's to a fine 10 years, and here's to 10 great singles that are totally Far Out.

Grupo Batuque-Keyzer (MAW Dizub 'n' Kutz Mix)

Far Out's percussive collective meets the NuYorican masters in a Brazilian/Afrobeat sound-clash and everyone's a winner, baby. High-quality, offbeat party style par excellence.

Friends From Rio 2-Cravo E Canela (IG Culture Mixes)

A direct flight from West London to Brazil, with Bembe Segue on the vocal tip and broken master IG testing fresh rhythm ground. See those dots? Consider them joined.

Flytronix-Shades Of Joe

Appearing on Far Out sister label Solaria, Flytronix stepped out of d & b and straight into breakbeat jazz-funk heaven. Ludicrously funky and infectious, this wins over a dancefloor every time.

Nature's Plan Feat. Ed Motta-Without Words

Marc Mac. Ed Motta's sweetly scatting jazz vocal. Future/broken Brazilian boogie inna 4 Hero style. Proper uplifting joy. Nuff said.

Troubleman-Strike Hard

A heavy-skanking Afrobeat epic from the Jedi Knight Mark Pritchard. Ten minutes of dub chamber dancefloor sonics with the fattest drums in captivity.

Da Lata-Ponteio

1996 classic from De Lata. Chris Bowden's sax and Liliana Chachian's vocals soar on this sublime blueprint where old Brazil meets new bossa.

Grupo Batuque-E Ruim (Zero DB Remix)

Taken from the *Rhythmix Reluque Batuque* album, this only appeared as a promo, but we're including it anyway. Zero DB's fierce bass and heavy breaks take the Brazilian percussionists to new heights of toughness.

Big Bang-Colours

Early business from Simone Serritella's Big Bang project. This 1999 single combined deep jazz swing with Detroit techno flavors that were ahead of their time.

Simone Serritella-Here Comes The Family

Another pick from sister label Solaria, as Italian producer Simone Serritella goes diving bell-deep with this hypnotic tech/jazz/house beauty. }

Far Out's newest compilations are Brazilian Love Affair 4 and Off The Shelf. www.faroutrecordings.com



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ROUGH DRAFT

"Interviews can really fuck up your day," announces Sean Booth. It's 9AM and the plain-speaking Lancashire lad is relaxing in the secluded charms of a faux-workman's cottage in the grounds of a British hotel. Outside, a river gurgles with freshly melted snow, while inside Booth shares a morning spliff with his partner Rob Brown. Booth is explaining why the reputedly temperamental Autechre are receiving a weeklong procession of journalists. He doesn't like to be disturbed. "Normally you do press on and off for two months and it interferes with our work. I'm not answering the phone in the studio."

Booth's sensitivity to his environment has led him to forsake the urban landscapes of his youth in Rochdale, Manchester for a technological world constructed among the thatched roofs of Suffolk, England. *Draft 7.30*, Autechre's seventh studio album, was recorded here. "It's not like a bedroom studio where you might be influenced by outsiders," observes Brown, who has his own studio set-up at his place in London. Booth says he's happier here in the countryside because he's not being force-fed information about other people's daily cycles. He doesn't have to hear them getting ready for work, and he doesn't get bored so easily. He notes that previously, Autechre would knock out tunes in two weeks "to get them out of the way." On *Draft 7.30*, they averaged three to four weeks per track.

A journalist reputedly told Autechre that *Draft 7.30* "made her feel like she was wandering around a bleak housing estate." Although Booth accuses her of being "middle class," he admits that the album sounds more urban than its predecessors do. "Maybe we're harking back to bleak estates?" he speculates. "When we were making music like [that on our second

album] *Amber*, we were living on a bleak housing estate, which made it more mellow sounding," concludes Brown.

Autechre didn't plan *Draft 7.30*. Even the name is a working title that stuck because they couldn't think of anything more appropriate when they sent the work to Warp. Originally, it was *Draft 7.1*, then 7.2, then different versions until it ended up at 7.30. Despite holding a godlike reputation among programmers who love music—Boards of Canada, Pilote, Plaid and Aphex Twin—Autechre's main intention with this album was to curtail their use of new software. The duo agree that they overdosed on technology on their previous album, 2001's *Confield*, so they refrained from downloading any new programs or plug-ins for *Draft 7.30*. As such, the album found them harking back to their earlier circumstances.

"When we started out in '87 we didn't have money to spend on gear. We'd buy a bit of equipment and really get to know it. Now it's so easy to download 500 new bits of software in an afternoon," says Booth, who, in an issue of *Jockey Slut*, claimed that the increased availability to gear has forced electronica into the hands of "Ford Fiesta owners" who lack creativity. Brown: "We've found interesting things in stuff we already have. Autechre has always been about squeezing the most out of what you've got, taking back-routes to do things, plugging a bit of equipment into something that wasn't designed to receive its information. This time it's about composition rather than programming."

Consequently, they believe *Draft 7.30* is a more "personal" album, although you'd have to be an aural genius to detect this among the abstract squeaks, groans and hisses. As clever as Autechre undoubtedly are, *Draft 7.30* isn't their most digestible album—it's more an exercise in mastering technology. "There's more of us in this

one," insists Booth. "We love *Confield*, but know it's a little bit too 'mathematical' for some people who might think it's not got the same qualities as other music. [It's kind of like] when I first heard acid house—I thought, 'This isn't the way music's supposed to be.'"

TAPE HEADS

The promos of *Draft 7.30* were sent out on cassette tape. "[Cassettes] hold a significance for us because we grew up swapping tapes in a music sharing culture based on high-speed dubbing, not dial-up speed," explains Brown in well-rehearsed promotional patter. "Our early promos are on tape. They were the last universal format before everything went digital. People sling cassettes about and you find them on the floor. It's totally different to the world of vinyl."

Is their tape-loving wholly nostalgic? Autechre are aware that while vinyl copies of *Draft 7.30* would have gone straight to eBay, digital copies would have been turned into MP3s flitting around the internet. It's a format that Booth hates because he thinks their music "sounds pretty snuff on MP3." Insists Brown: "Tapes give a good sense of the music without loads being shaved off, or the dynamics being altered."

Booth says that he doesn't object to fans downloading Autechre for free—he just prefers the sound of less easily accessible 44K versions (or ones released officially through Warp). Rather than seeing the internet as a great leveler, he believes it is a "highly exclusive worldwide web. Most people don't have a connection that allows them to download high-resolution files. Look at a physical map of internet portals. They're all in America, Northern Europe and a bit of Japan. The internet is more culturally exclusive than Coca Cola."



Brown, as ever, pinpoints the flaws in his partner's grand theory. "You can get broad-band in India and the Middle East because loads of programmers live there."

INDUSTRY BUM RUSHERS

Throughout their musical career, Autechre have continually name-checked hip-hop as an influence. What do they think of its increased presence in the charts? Booth: "Occasionally there's a good tune, but even the Neptunes—who everybody [seems to like]—they're ripping off El-P's beats. It's all pop music." And how is pop music different from what Autechre does? "Some people think it's a genre in itself and you can make a good pop record," Booth notes. "I don't think that's the case at all. It's surely about sales, marketing and image. But it ain't difficult to make a catchy tune and get it trapped into people's heads."

More than ever, Autechre aren't about to take the easy option for the sake of commercial success. Booth: "I don't think people are drawn to that type of music naturally. It's just easy to consume when you're driving to work. You don't have to think about what you're listening to." The masses aren't being lazy, he continues—it's more likely that the programming directors are becoming increasingly conservative. "The music industry is becoming just like Hollywood. All the money for record labels and studios is getting centralized because there are bigger organizations to maintain." Under different circumstances, in a parallel universe where knowledge ruled, Autechre could be number one.

Back in the real world, the duo reflect on current events in hip-hop. When questioned about Jam Master Jay, rather than reeling off the usual answers about a hero gunned down, Autechre are predictably critical. Booth: "Everyone credits Run DMC for taking rap overground, but 'Walk This Way' wasn't the first rap record to make the charts. Rap didn't have to

blend itself with rock music to be accepted by the mainstream—it was accepted four years before with Kurtis Blow, [Sugar Hill Gang's] 'Rapper's Delight' and Melle Mel." Booth claims Jay was his favorite member of Run DMC, but the recent news of the DJ's death was "meaningless" to him. "I thought, 'everyone's going to celebrate him like he's this major-league hip-hop icon.'" Meanwhile, Brown is "surprised" about Adidas selling a pair of shell toes out of "respect." Unsurprisingly, Booth thinks Adidas are "fucking cunts."

IT'S THEIR PARTY

Not everything is so dour in Autechre-land. Booth has positive things to say about the Spain-based multimedia festival Sonar—both the way its organizers integrate hyper-commercial with experimental music, and how the popular night schedule funds daytime events (although he can't help commenting that there were "loads of Spanish people playing crap records"). *Draft 7.30* will be released the day after the All Tomorrow's Parties festival, the British version of which Booth and Brown are curating in 2003. They've pulled in a dream line-up that includes Public Enemy (Brown: "Like landing a whale") and the Magic Band ("Our heroes asking us what they should play"), alongside their own Autechre alter-ego Gescom, and are enjoying the process very much indeed. They're interested in how their slant will make this *ATP* different from ones curated by Sonic Youth, former Pavement member Stephen Malkmus and, er, *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening in LA. Although the fest was originally scheduled for Japan, Autechre opted for home-turf when Japanese organizers suggested Brian Eno. "We might as well have booked U2 to play," quips Booth. Autechre liken the selection process to radio DJing. "Like when we did pirate stations," claims Booth. "Or like putting a

mixtape together for someone and being really anal about it."

Similarly to curating, the making of *Draft 7.30* required Autechre to look back at their roots, largely because they had advanced beyond the latest developments in technology. Booth: "By building our own sequencers, we've learnt so much about writing computer programs that we feel totally fluent. Technology has become transparent. We don't have to worry about it presenting any obstacles, because we can take another route." It's a situation that inevitably makes them critical of the nerdy laptop culture with which they're associated. "Laptops are such a lifestyle statement," sighs Booth. "There's nothing worse than walking into a bar and someone coming up with a Powerbook, opening it up and saying 'look what I've been doing.' For us, computers are great communicating and music-writing tools, but they need people to use them."

Booth believes computers will be superceded by more advanced machines. "It's pure speculation, but I'm pretty convinced they're going to reach the ceiling soon in terms of throwing electrons down bits of wire." It's this ceiling that made them turn to analog technology on *Draft 7.30* to create elements that new-school computers couldn't. "I use computers and think, 'This sounds a bit tight.' Then I use an analogue synth and it's *universally* tight," explains Booth. "Analog technology deals with curving, constantly changing values, and it doesn't reduce everything to a series of steps. By working with constant curves, you can do loads more full-on [mathematical processes]. I can see there's lots of room for improvement in terms of computational technology." While they wait for the scientists to catch up, Autechre must adapt old technology to draft sounds for the future.✿

Autechre's *Draft 7.30* is out now on Warp Recordings. www.warprecords.com.

EVEN THE NEPTUNES—WHO EVERYBODY SEEMS TO LIKE—THEY'RE RIPPING OFF EL-P'S BEATS.

AUTECHRE'S INTELLIGENCE MAY BE GREATER THAN THE CAPACITY OF YOUR IMAC, BUT LIKE YOU AND I, THEY STILL USE NON-DIGITAL TOOLS IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. BELOW, BOOTH AND BROWN REVEAL THEIR FAVORITE FOUR.



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THE IDEA OF NORTH

EVER WONDERED WHAT SNOW SOUNDS LIKE? GERMAN EXPERIMENTAL ELECTRONIC COMPOSER THOMAS KÖNER CHARTS A COURSE TO THE LIMITS OF THE AUDIBLE WORLD.
WORDS PHILIP SHERBURNE IMAGES CANDELIZ

PART ONE: A NOTION OF COLD

A drone is a drone is a drone.

Unless it's one of Thomas Köner's drones, in which case it's something else entirely. It could be a plane of abstraction ruptured by the occasional appearance of the real. An oilslick of dark matter that sets speaker-cones trembling. Or, perhaps, simply a wash of color as deceptively three-dimensional as one of Gerhard Richter's gray paintings.

For 13 years now, Köner has been exploring the limits of the drone, crafting dark, sprawling sheets of sound that hang like a leaden blanket in the air. Simultaneously noxious and comforting, claustrophobic and almost frighteningly broad, Köner pieces reflect the bleakness of his native Dortmund, the decaying buckle in Germany's rust-belt. Harnessing the sounds of struck metal and the lethargy of chemical decomposition, they seem to come across as artistic statements on the state of post-industrial Europe.

But they also reflect more private, philosophical concerns. As one half of avant-techno emissaries Porter Ricks, Köner's explored the idea of nautical travel as a mode of radical connectivity in pieces with titles like "Port of Call," "Port of Nuba" and "Nautical Dub." In his solo work, he touches down in an Arctic region that even the icebreakers can't reach, settling into a frozen, forbidding isolationism—hence albums with titles like *Permafrost*, *Daikan* ("great cold"), and *Unerforschtes Gebiet* ("uncharted territories").

"The cold slows things down," explains Köner by phone from Dortmund. "It has a strong impact on acoustic qualities. If you've ever experienced extreme cold, you hear things differently. At, say, -15° Fahrenheit, it starts to become really interesting: all the material is crackling."

Appropriately, the long piece that takes up the first disc of *Zkylop*, Köner's most recent album for Mille Plateaux, patches together field recordings from the mountainous wilderness with deep, glacial rumblings. Although the field recordings for the piece, entitled "Une Topographie Sonare: Col de Vence," were made by the phonographer Yannick Dauby, they reflect Köner's longstanding attraction to the wilderness. It was during the extended mountain hikes of his youth that the musician discovered the acoustic properties of the cold. "It's like nature is holding in its breath to make every event more spectacular, more precious. It's a bit like a drug."

"It's also a kind of philosophical statement," continues Köner, contrasting his personal preference for the "coldness" of solitude to the "warmth" of social interaction. He downplays his association with the term "isolationism," a strain of dark ambient music first documented by a 1994 compilation of the same name. "But," he concedes, "it's true that if I'm feeling isolated, I would always try to face it and work with it, rather than making a party." Still, Köner's good humor belies any notion of the artist as grim or anti-social; throughout our forty-minute conversation, his easy laugh frequently bubbles up, like air pockets escaping from ancient icepack.



I FEEL CLOSE TO THESE
SOUNDS. THEY'RE A
PART OF MY PAST



PART TWO: THE AUDIBLE ARTS

Like many of his colleagues in the vague terrain of "sound art," Köner is deeply influenced by other media. *Unerforschtes Gebiet*, for instance, springs from a map of the Arctic Circle that Köner found in an 1897 book about polar explorations. Where the known world ended, there was only a yellowish stain of speculative geography; the North Pole sat dead-center. "I saw this map and I thought, 'We must do a record, a vinyl record, and put the pole in the center of the disc,'" recalls Köner. He carried the idea with him for 10 years before finally executing the project in 1991, producing a vinyl picture disc depicting a copy of the map.

The project's gestation period is unusual in an era of accelerated output, with some artists seeming to crank out a new album every time their software updates. But for Köner, a decade is nothing. "Some of the sounds I work with, I've been using since I've been doing music," says Köner. "That's a very long time, and I haven't replaced them, which is not really trendy. But I feel close to these sounds. They're a part of my past." In this light, Köner's relationship to sound seems far less about process than a way of feeling one's way through personal history, with only ears as a guide.

Dauby's field recordings, although newcomers to Köner's stock of sonic elements, carried with them a similar intensity. "I liked working with them," says Köner, "because they gave me the opportunity to touch memory within myself, but also open it up and make the abstraction settle in real life. This was how I related to the sounds. It was very personal for me." This duality lies at the heart of every one of Köner's pieces, in which abstraction and representation lock together like a climber's handshake.

Köner created other sounds especially for each piece. "It's always a mix of techniques and approaches," he notes. *Daikan*, for instance, draws from multiple sources of "gray noise," including a pedestrian tunnel and the playback from a blank VHS cassette. In *Unerforschtes Gebiet*, Köner runs ancient, unexposed film stock through a projector, and the dust particles become an accidental "soundtrack" in the optical reader. In other pieces, heretofore undocumented, Köner "plays" a film projector, fitting it out with internal contact mics. But he's reluctant to go into more detail about the process, simply because he sees it as irrelevant to the final outcome. "Basically, [process] is just a physical thing," says Köner. "It's the same as asking how the violin works. It's just some wood and some strings. It's boring. There's no mystery involved anymore."

Instead, Köner treats his material with reverence. "I don't use an archive," he explains. "There are two or three sounds that I really love that are my best friends. But there are many things that I leave behind when the piece is done. The have to be searched for and well-prepared and nourished, but then it's over." ♦

Zyklop is out now on Mille Plateaux. www.force-inc.com. More on Thomas Köner at www.koener.de.

THERE ARE TWO OR THREE SOUNDS THAT I REALLY LOVE THAT ARE MY BEST FRIENDS. BUT THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT I LEAVE BEHIND WHEN THE PIECE IS DONE. THEY HAVE TO BE SEARCHED FOR AND WELL-PREPARED AND NOURISHED, BUT THEN IT'S OVER.

ARTISTS ON THOMAS KÖNER



Deadbeat, ~scape Recordings "One of electronic music's true savants, and certainly one of my personal heroes. *Zyklop* may very well be electronic music's first real epic."



Asmus Tietchens, Die Stadt Recordings "Why did the State of Nuuk (Greenland) not ask Thomas Köner for an anthem after it became independent from Denmark?"



Kevin Martin/The Bug "The awe-inspiring music of Thomas Köner reflects the genuine originality of its maker. The compellingly desolate inner space of his timeless compositions may contradict the outward appearance of this witty and eccentric man, but the obsessively minimal vision is a tribute to his bullshit-free aesthetic."

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"WHEN I WAS LIVING IN LONDON I WOULD PLAY ABBEY LINCOLN'S STRAIGHT AHEAD ALBUM UNTIL IT WAS ALMOST BROKEN."

GLOBETROTTING VERBAL GYMNAST T-LOVE IS FINALLY READY TO DEBUT HER HIP-HOP INTERPRETATION OF THE BLUES. SO GATHER 'ROUND.



Hip-hop has always been about ceaseless movement, from breakdancing in the parks of the Bronx and Harlem to the sea of changes in the music itself. But it's also about geographical movement.

For LA rapper, singer and label-owner T-Love, the movement has been from South Central to London, to Paris and around again, following the tangled routes and roots of the African diaspora. Her first EP, "Return of the B-Girl" (released on her own Pickinenny label in 1998)—a pared-down, hard-rhyming paean to such pioneers as MC Lyte and Queen Latifah—became a cult classic. T-Love was well-acquainted with the ascendant West Coast underground, having worked with Miles from Breakestra, Chali 2na from Jurassic 5, and other artists whose names would soon be known outside of this small coterie. After a quiet period, T-Love's first album, *Long Way Back* is on the street to move your feet, as Grandmaster Caz would have put it.

T-Love was in France at the time of this wide-ranging conversation, in which hip-hop was only the starting point.

XLR8R: Your new record is full of laments, flashes of joy, and definitely more contemplative than "Return of the B-Girl." Why the change in mood?

T-Love: I did that on purpose. By the time I recorded "Return of the B-Girl," I was beginning to get bored with how I was interpreting hip-hop. I wanted to do an old school hip-hop record, and at the time, there were female rappers, but [they weren't] doing the b-girl thing. So I did battle rhymes and freestyles to prove to the world that I *am* a b-girl, and gave props to MC Lyte, Jazzy Joyce and Queen Latifah, because I knew the next project would be very different.

XLR8R: When I heard "Swinging Malindy" [on the new album], it immediately recalled the Lindy Hop, and your vocals on that track are reminiscent of Abbey Lincoln. Is she an influence?

TL: Yes. Abbey Lincoln is one of my favorite singers. She was able to do the things Billie Holiday wasn't—write and record her own songs. Hip-hop, be-bop, to me it's the same. Be-bop had its own language, its own clothing. Some music is music and some music is a lifestyle, and hip-hop and be-bop are connected in that way.

XLR8R: So the blues also have a considerable influence on *Long Way Back*?

TL: Definitely. When I was living in London, I would play Lincoln's *Straight Ahead* album until it was almost broken. My flatmate was Ollie Teeba of The Herbaliser, and I would walk around singing all her songs, but in a rap sort of way. We thought there must be a way to bring her music into the album. So many people *talk* about how hip-hop is remi-

niscient of the blues. We wanted to *demonstrate* it. In Detroit, we worked with JayDee and Dwele. Dwele sang on and produced quite a few tracks on the album, and he suggested adding a swing feel, and the result is the final version of "Swing Malindy."

XLR8R: *Long Way Back* is one of few albums I've heard recently that occupies a certain place in music of the African diaspora: music with beautiful melodies and grooves that also sings about living within a white-dominated culture...

TL: ...in a very palatable way? Yes. When I first moved to Paris, I was thinking about all the black American people who'd come here in the 1920s and '30s, and at first I didn't really feel it. But my favorite writer, James Baldwin, lived here. Josephine Baker lived here. I visited the neighborhoods they lived in and began to understand it. I was sitting one day near Notre Dame, and a guy approached me asking if he could paint a portrait of me, and I thought, "Why not?" I started singing some Abbey Lincoln songs and a crowd of 20 people gathered around [and listened].

XLR8R: I was going to ask a question you've probably been asked many times: What's your experience as a black woman in the predominantly white, male music industry?

TL: Actually, I don't get asked that question.

XLR8R: Really? I was going to suggest that the album addresses it to a certain degree, but if you'd like to speak to that question, please do.

TL: When I was younger, my parents sent me to an all-white school, and I felt very alone there. People stared. After two years, I began to see the prejudices among white people—anti-Semitism, for example. But racism really hit me for the first time when I went to Texas to visit my grandmother. There was a lot of hatred of black people. At school, I never had to deal with the "n-word." It wasn't 'til I got to France that I realized that people there didn't hold my sex and my race over my head. In America, they did. How do I deal with it in the music industry? I let people know that I know what's going on, that certain things go down. It's very hard. But among artists, there ain't nobody tripping on that shit. We're all here as artists at the bottom of the rung anyway.

XLR8R: What do you have planned for the near future?

TL: I'm living in Paris now, and I'll move here quite soon. I'm still running the Pickinenny label, but it's going to be more international. I'm playing live in France right now. I may be touring in the US, but that's still up in the air.

Long Way Back is out soon on Astralwerks Recordings. www.astralwerks.com

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TEN...

JAPAN'S NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA SEES WITH A CHILD'S EYE-VIEW WHEN CREATING HIS INTRICATE ELECTRONIC PORTRAITS.

You have to wonder why a 34-year-old producer in his musical prime would decide to stop performing indefinitely and perhaps even opt for total retirement. Especially considering that he's released three new records in the last three months and recently finished a successful US tour. Something just doesn't make sense here.

Nobukazu Takemura is quick to rectify any confusion. "First of all, recording and composing are my main interests. Live performance is not something that I do inherently. As for retiring, it's just a vile rumor that was spread by my Japanese distributor in order to sell more records."

Yet, for someone as serene and composed as Takemura, distribution hype seems a little over the edge. His fan base isn't a mile-long line of screaming pre-pubescent girls. He doesn't flex any of the muscle of a mega-popstar. And most

importantly, his tracks are anything but trendy productions cast in the mold of The Neptunes or Dr. Dre. Rather, Takemura's palette in the last six years has resembled the works of sonic minimalists Steve Reich, Oval and the Dylan Group, the latter two groups of which he now joins labels with.

Looking back on his career as a musician, encounters with record execs and their unending quest for "hot" are quite familiar annoyances. "When I was an artist under contract with Warner Music Japan, I lived pretty comfortably. But I always had these quarrels with the producers, directors and staff, so I had to get out.

"Major Japanese record labels are only looking for new hooks, and they don't pay attention to the music and how it sounds," he adds. "The substance of the work isn't very important to them. They're more interested in trends, sales and packaging design. So they'll put phrases on the packaging like 'includes remixes by...,' and 'produced in Chicago,' just to sell more records."

Quite like the trends now being chased by these record labels, Takemura's career began as an amalgam of hip-hop, Eno ambience and jazz standards, all of which are perfectly traceable on his early-'90s music output. Shifting from club-DJing, to scratching records in a trio with Eye Yamatsuka (of Boredoms fame), to composing for and performing with a 10-piece jazz band, Takemura has always confronted music almost as a disposable toy. His sound is always playful, and the rules of any particular scene simply don't apply. It's no wonder his recordings have been released on labels with names like Childisc and Toy's Factory.

Around 1995, Takemura's sound evolved away from hip-hop and horns to the maximized minimalism that bubbles and burps from his more recent work. Eventually, post-rock icons Tortoise asked him to open for them on a Japan/US tour. That led to the Thrill Jockey label releasing two of the producer's already classic releases—the 1999 album *Scope* and the 2001 EP *Sign*—as well as two out of his three 2003 releases.

Around the same time that people started praising those early Thrill Jockey records, Takemura

entered some rather unlikely arenas. He was asked to score the music to one of fashion designer Issey Miyake's runway shows. A number of television programs and electronics companies asked for theme songs and jingles. Even Sony contracted him to create the sounds for their second overpriced robot



“MAJOR JAPANESE RECORD LABELS ARE ONLY TAKING FURTHER KENNY G AND THEY DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THE MUSIC AND HOW IT SOUNDS. THE SUBVERSIVE LABELS IN THE MARKET ARE MORE INTERESTED IN TRENDS, SALES AND PICKING DISCS IN THE PACKAGING LIKE INCLUDING REMIXES BY AND PRODUCED IN CHICAGO. JUST TO SELL MORE RECORDS.”

dog, Aibo. Not very proud of some of these projects, Takemura explains that “[as] with live performance, I consider the remixes and the TV music that I make to be jobs. But I regard music that I compose for myself as my work. I clearly separate them.”

To maintain this separation, Takemura uses his musical gear to lock away his personal music in what he calls a “song diary,” where his sounds can fluctuate freely. “No human has the same feelings every day,” he says. “And in the same way, my music changes with my feelings each day. Many musicians only make music in one style, but this doesn’t make sense to me. Maybe I feel melody one day, noise another day, and the day before that, jazz.”

This temperament shapes his multiple new releases for Thrill Jockey and Bubblecore. For the two Thrill Jockey albums, *10th* and *Assembler*, Takemura displays some of the torn-out pages of his “diary” from the past couple of years. The albums share the centralized spaciousness found on all of his releases, but shift emotionally between the grit and fuzz of some tracks and the paced, melodic, and grooving keyboard syncopation of others.

Songbook, Takemura’s third album this year, both follows along those lines and opens up yet another set of possibilities. “*Songbook* and *10th* were written at the same time,” he notes. “But on *10th*, a speech-synth does the singing, whereas *Songbook* has a real singer. In composing the songs, they were simply broken down into melodies suitable for mechanistic sounds and those suitable for acoustics.” Released on Bubblecore (the label that put out Takemura’s first album, *Child’s View*, in the States), *Songbook* retains an emotional diversity that finds a different expression via live instrumentation and human vocals, a factor that is key to tracing how Takemura shifts his sound so fluidly between albums.

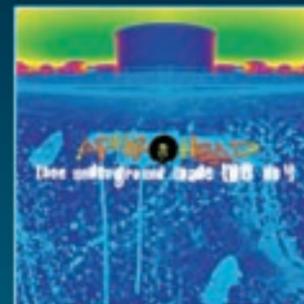
Throughout all of his releases, Takemura’s work always breathes an ephemeral air. His sound follows neither guidelines nor mandates, so whether an old song makes it onto a new album is insignificant, and whether it’s performed by a band or on machines depends merely on which method is most effective. And there’s never a question of genre, as the very concept left his mind long ago.

Not conforming to any precepts or particular tastes, Takemura holds a singular role as a musician. “My music is like a cue or a trigger,” he explains. “Listeners can interact with my songs, and they are a principal element in my work. But what it comes down to is this: the music is already in the minds of the people who listen.”

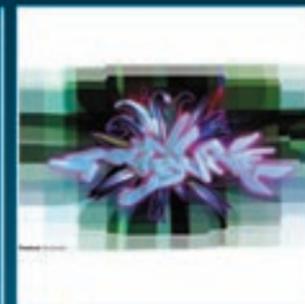
Find new album releases by Nobukazu Takemura on Thrill Jockey and Bubblecore Records. www.thrilljockey.com, www.bubblecore.com.

TAKEMURA'S TOP FIVE RECORDINGS OF THE MOMENT

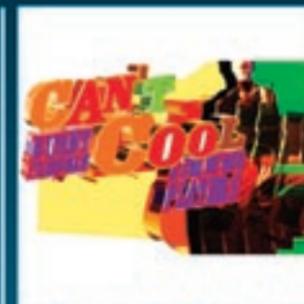
1. Charles Dodge *Any Resemblance is Purely Coincidental* (New Albion).
“He uses a vocoder a lot, and the record is both experimental and funny. This is very important. Humor is a must in music.”
2. Gil Evans *The Individualism of Gil Evans* (Verve).
“I think he is a genius who creates an incredible harmony in the world of jazz.”
3. *New York School 3* (hatHUT).
“It’s kind of like a [supergroup] of contemporary classical composers [including Morton Feldman, John Cage]. There are a lot of great pieces.”
4. *Waterform Yokaze* (Childisc).
“This was released on my label, Childisc. He lives in Kyoto, and the record has a great instrumental rock sound that’s absorbed into the tribal spirituality of reggae and Brazilian music.”
5. Christian Wolff *I Like to Think of Harriet Tubman* (Mode).
“This work is a contemporary classic, too, but I feel that it has an interesting relationship with the hip-hop and jazz of New York in the ‘80s. There is an obvious difference between this and what was coming from Europe at the time.”



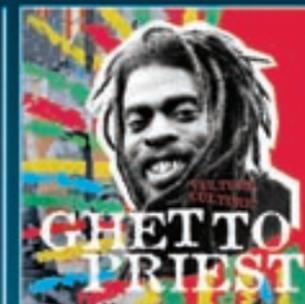
FELIX DA HOUSECAT PRESENTS APHROHEAD
The Underground Made Me Do It
Four-star reviewer Felix’s underground alter ego, Aphrohead, resurrected for this new full length release, a mixture of straightforward house, Sly electro, and percussive techno.



FREEFORM
Condensed (Finest Files 1997-2002)
With this compiling mix of FREEFORM highlights from the past seven years, Noriplace provides an introduction to SIMON PIRKE’s finest grooves. FREEFORM highlights, specially edited/re-edited by BURNT FRIEDMAN. All the tracks are available for the first time on vinyl.



BURNT FRIEDMAN & THE NU DUB PLAYERS
Cant Cool
BURNT FRIEDMAN’s credits include various solo albums, collaborations with ATOM HEART, JES FLANGER, the pioneers in Nu-Jazz and REPLICANT RUMBA ROCKERS, JAGI URBEZEIT, ICAN drummer, a remix for TOSCA and his aka project DROME. Excite full-funk-reggae-soul hybrid. A future classic.



GHETTO PRIEST
Vulture Culture
Strong debut album by On-U Sound System MC with conscious lyrics. GHETTO PRIEST is a longtime member of AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE and is guest singer on albums for artists like ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION, THE UNDERWOLVES, SINEAD O’CONNOR & GROOVE ARMADA.



MANASSEH MEETS THE EQUALIZER
Step Like Pepper
Previous MANASSEH records/productions were released on his own Re label. Acid Jazz Records, STEREO MC’s Response, Echo Beach, and WAA! Mr. Made (mix by THE ORB’s ALEX PATTERSON and KILLING JOKE’s YOUTH) MANASSEH has recently released SUPER DISCOUNT & LAMB. Best dub flavor.



DAVE RALPH
Resident Alien
Mentorizing progressive house/trance tracks blended together in a seamless 70+ minute mix. CD 2 features a 40-minute mega-mix of tracks from Dave Ralph’s soon to be launched Refactor Recordings, plus bonus interview footage.



RUDE
The Horror
Lead track from RU’s seminal debut, Dead Ring on Definitive Jax.

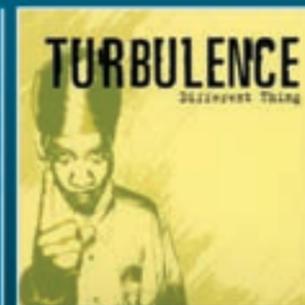


525/9
Digital Russian
Also Multiple and Snooker Boy (Tropics/Kompakt) the acclaimed duo surpasses expectations with this house fueled, full length debut.

AVAILABLE AT:
Anebebe - SF & LA • Arsenal’s - Philadelphia • Aron’s - LA • Abenec - Milwaukee • Bent Crayon - Cleveland • Criminal - Atlanta • Flat Black & Circular - East Lansing • Gramophone - Chicago • HipHopSite.com • Kim’s - NYC
Let It Be - Minneapolis • Music Millennium - Portland • Newbury Comics - MA • Orpheum - Seattle • Other Music - NYC • Park Ave - Orlando • Plan 9 - Richmond • Sansiboua.com • 33 Degrees - Austin • Twist & Shout - Denver



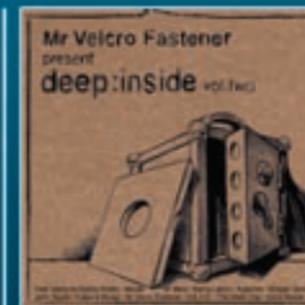
TAME ONE
When Rappers Attack
The rocky headed former has officially resuracted much to the delight of the Hip Hop world with this debut solo effort. Produced from RUDE, J Zook, Mighty M, Camu Tao, and Reef.



TURBULENCE
Different Thing
Second album by very respected new Dancehall/Reggae artist & talent TURBULENCE, who is listed as one of today’s hottest Jamaican artist by many insiders. Produced by ANTHONY SENIOR from Kingston, Jamaica.



A BLOW TO THE STATE
Various Artists
The new label compilation from Coup d’Etat featuring J-LIVE, MC Paul Barman, Akrobatik, Soul Purpose, and many others. Also includes a bonus megamix from Brooklyn’s fast-rising Embedded production team.



MR. VELCRO FASTENER
DEEP INSIDE VOL. 2
Various Artists
Vol. 2 of the Deep Inside compilation series this time presented by Fresh duo MR. VELCRO FASTENER. Tracks by ALTECHRE, MORGAN GEIST, MOUSE ON MARS, DOCTOR ROOFT, JOHN TELADA, MICOLAJI and many more - unreleased and full length.



ANDRÆS SAAG'S SWEDISH-MADE BROKEN-BEAT HOUSE MUSIC IS GARRING THE KNICKERS OFF FANS FROM STOCKHOLM TO SEATTLE.

WORDS TIMO KANGAS IMAGES ABIGAIL'S PARTY

» Mr. and Mrs. Saag have always been encouraging parents. They don't indulge in music-making themselves, but they do try to keep up with the kinda sounds the youth go wild for. Mom even puts The Chemical Brothers on her Christmas wish list. So you can bet her son's gonna work it out.

A childhood spent in this open-minded musical climate has done 22-year-old Swedish multi-talent Andreas Saag a world of good. And now the world is catching the buzz about the boy. Ever since his debut 12", "A Swell Session," landed back in 2001, everyone from Gilles Peterson to the Kyoto Jazz Massive have been quick to catch on. The two subsequent Swell Session frisbees thrown our way since then—"Gone" and "Let Me Decide," both on Sweden's Hollow Recordings—have both posited a mix of jazz, funk, soul and some Latin flava to go with your broken-beat mash-up. And both have scored the man even more global acclaim.

But zoom back in to the idyllic picture of archipelago activity at the Saag household, way out on the isle of Hönö, just north of Sweden's second biggest city, Gothenburg. It was there that six-year-old Andreas started playing the piano, moving on to jazz after sitting through years of classical training. His time in a music college in Gothenburg garnered Saag a lot of friends with whom he still collaborates. One of them, Christoffer Berg (who records as Hird), hooked Saag up with Olympic-class singer Yukimi Nagano, whose gutsy vocals now grace many of the Swell Session tunes. Fellow Swedes and old-school jazz revivalists Koop were so impressed with Nagano's prowess that they instantly took her onboard for their latest record. Quite a coup—but it hasn't kept her from appearing on the debut Swell Session album, due this fall.

XLR8R: *Swell Session, Stateless, Andreas Saag—you sure have a lot of different guises.*

AS: Swell Session is my main project. That's where my focus is. Stateless [whose recordings come out on London's Freerange Recordings] is an identity I use when the music is on more of an electronic, jazzy house tip. When I do techno stuff, I just use my real name, like most techno artists—Robert Hood, Morgan Geist, Joel Mull...

My dad was born in Sweden but his parents came from Estonia—Saag is the Estonian word for a "saw." Actually, it's becoming common for waiters at Indian restaurants to crack up when they come to my table to pick up my credit card. Saag is Indian for "spinach," you know.

XLR8R: *Maybe you should start paying with greens, then. [Urrgh - Ed.] Talk about meeting*

your fans in Japan.

AS: Man, that was so weird and wonderful. It all started with an e-mail I got saying that someone had played my 12" in Japan, and that the crowd had gone bananas. So, you know, I just had to go there to see for myself. It was fantastic. Just walking around in Tokyo, not meeting a single [white] person, and hardly [hearing] any English. It's like stepping into another world, a fantasy. People were really nice, and I did shows in four cities. Kyoto was a great one, at this club run by Kyoto Jazz Massive.

XLR8R: *You're on Hollow Recordings out of Gothenburg. What's the scene like there?*

AS: There aren't too many good club nights on. There's a Friday nightspot called Mecca at the local jazz club Fasching, where you can meet some like-minded people. I'm one of the resident DJs there, and we've had acts like Jazzanova and Nuspirt Helsinki come over.

But musically, Gothenburg really is on a roll. I'd say that at least five out of my ten favorite producers live in this city—people like Quant, Jol, Hird and the guys in Play. We all know each other and influence one another. Ernesto, the vocalist on a couple of my tunes, is coming up with some great stuff on his own. And Paul L, this guy who has a jazzy flava. Yeah, Gonkyborg is definitely happening.

XLR8R: *Gonkyborg?*

AS: Yes, it's a term that's derived from the words "good" and "funky." There's even a compilation album on Hollow with that name. It's just a typical Gothenburg type of play on words.

XLR8R: *What other projects do you see on the horizon?*

AS: Right now I'm concentrating on the first Swell Session album, which hopefully will be out in September. There's a big German label interested in releasing it in conjunction with Hollow, but I can't really say too much about it yet. I've also got another thing going with Quant—he's a fellow Hollow artist. We call ourselves Gonky Business, and there's some stuff coming out on Naked Music. Those tracks we create just for the hell of it—nothing too serious. Also, sometimes if I want to do maybe some drum & bass, then that just won't fit into these regular projects I have. I'll tell you a secret: sometimes I do broken beat stuff, remixes and that. But it's under an alias so people don't know that it's me. You gotta have a secret. ☺

Andreas Saag's album as Stateless, The Art Of No State is out now on Freerange Recordings, www.freerangerecordings.com. For more on Swell Session, visit www.hollow.nu.



"I DIDN'T HAVE A CAR, SO WE USED TO MOVE OUR THINGS AROUND ON THE TRAINS. SOMEBODY WOULD TAKE THE RECORDS, THE SPEAKER AND TURNTABLES AND WE'D JUST LOAD UP THE SUBWAY CAR AND RIDE IT TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CITY."

LION IN THE BRONX

THE ECHO LIVES ON: IN AN AMAZING STORY OF SURVIVAL THROUGH CHANGING TIMES, XL88R PROFILES THE WACKIES REGGAE LABEL, A STALWART JAMAICAN-OWNED, US-BASED ENTERPRISE WHOSE POPULARITY IN THE '70S AND EARLY '80S MAY NOW BE MINGIFIED, AS A LEGION OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC FANS EMBRACE ITS MINIMALIST DUB AESTHETIC.

WORDS MITT FISHER IMAGES MICHAEL SCHMELLING

WATCH THIS SOUND

IN 1986, hardly anyone noticed the release of *Bullwackie*, a documentary about a soft-spoken Jamaican producer named Lloyd "Bullwackie" Barnes and his reggae label, Wackies. The film depicted Barnes at the center of a small but lively roots music scene, based around his recording studio at 241st Street and Whiteplains Road in the north Bronx. At the time, the world's attention was focused on the Bronx's other musical product, hip-hop, while far away in reggae's traditional power centers of Jamaica and England, the more processed throb of dancehall was taking over. Dub and roots were yesterday's news, and it's hard not to see *Bullwackie* as a film about the last holdout of a fading era. In the years immediately following the film's release, Barnes shut down his studio and Wackies releases gradually trickled down to nothing.

Seventeen years later, Jamaican music is the focus of a reissue frenzy spearheaded by labels like Blood & Fire and Pressure Sounds. Recordings that were originally pressed in amounts numbering in the hundreds are now finding an enormous global audience. But when the mysterious German techno label Basic Channel announced plans to reissue through EFA Distribution the Wackies back catalogue earlier this year, it did more than reopen a forgotten chapter of Jamaican music. The selection of mostly unknown releases revealed an extraordinary produc-

tion talent on par with the likes of King Tubby, Joe Gibbs and Lee Perry.

The small number of releases included in the reissue package—approximately 18 full length albums and singles—only hints at the much longer story of Wackies, which stretches back to the early days of Jamaican music. As a Kingston youth, Lloyd Barnes was entranced by the soundsystems of Duke Reid and Coxsone Dodd. "I was always a soundsystem lover, and growing up in Trenchtown and Jonestown, I had a lot of friends associated with Studio One, and we used to go around the soundsystem dances," he explains. Together with his friends Stranger Cole and Ken Boothe, Barnes spent much of his free time at the beaches by the Kingston airport attending the now legendary Treasure Isle dances that ran through the weekend. "We'd go to the dance on Friday, sleep on the beach and come back Monday morning," laughs Barnes. "There wasn't a violent element or that gun situation back then."

But as the political and economic realities of Jamaica soured in the late '60s, Barnes immigrated to the US to find work and wound up settling in the Bronx in 1968. Missing the communal atmosphere of the dances, Barnes started his own sound system called Bullwackie's Disco, spinning Studio One tunes and dubs at various locations around New York. "I didn't have a car, so we used to move our things around on the trains," says Barnes. "Somebody would take the records, the speaker and turntables and we'd just load up the subway car and ride it to different parts of the city." As he gained a following, however, the dances become increasingly violent. "We were lacking in competition in those days, so everybody came to our dances," explains Barnes. "When you have everybody together, they don't always agree and the violence would spoil up the dance." Not wanting to have his name associated with the growing notoriety, Barnes decided to make his own music. "I figured the dances served the local scene, but putting out records let us serve the world."

IN THE MIX

For the rest of the decade, Barnes put out loads of music through a blizzard of short-lived imprints like Aries, Jumbo Caribbean Groove, Footprint and City Line, earning a reputation as a first rate producer. He developed a top session band around the skills of sax player Jerry Johnson, drummer Fabian Cook and multi-instrumentalist Clive Hunt to back homegrown vocalists like Junior Delahaye and Milton Henry, the toaster Jah Batta and a sweetly sorrowful female duo called the Love Joys.

"The Wackies sound arched back to the period in Jamaican music where version turned into dub," says producer and Barnes's longtime friend Ray Hurford. "It's not quite dub, but it's a little more than version and very dramatic, with a lot of contrast—very edgy and twitchy." The involvement of Johnson and another horn player named Tom Bachelor also helped set Wackies apart. "They came up with a completely different horn sound," says Hurford. "It's more of a New Orleans jazz sound rather than the Jamaican route, which follows R&B and is very dry."

Barnes wasn't deaf to what was going on around him in the Bronx, either. As hip-hop began to emerge in the late-'70s, he recorded a series of singles, releasing only one, the "Wack Rap," in 1979. It's a mediocre, Sugar Hill-style rhythm, and Barnes quickly returned to the music he loved. Ironically, he says, the record was his all-time greatest seller, moving over 6,000 copies. "I could have made more of those records," he says. "But roots music and lovers rock is where my head was at."

DOORSTEP LINKS

Over time, the Wackies sound attracted established artists who recorded some of their most memorable songs with Barnes, like Sugar Minott's landmark roots tune "International Herb" and Horace Andy's pulsing dancehall version of "Money Money." But a considerable amount of Wackies cuts were sparked by chance arrivals, and Barnes chuckles when he recalls the stranded Jamaican artists who used to show up on his doorstep. "We encountered that a lot," he says. "It got so that people who I didn't even know would tell those guys 'go check Wackies.' And sometimes we'd cut a tune."

Despite his relative geographic isolation, Barnes frequently worked with Jamaican artists and producers like Bunny "Striker" Lee, Glenn Brown, Munchie Jackson and Lee "Scratch" Perry, who picked up on the unique vibe emanating from the Bronx. "The original Bullwackie's 'ting was just a natural approach to the music. It was a festive vibe everyday there," says Minott, who frequently brought two-track mixes from Jamaica for Barnes to mix and work his magic. "There were big studios at the time with a lot of different equipment and better mikes, but I like the authentic sound Bullwackie's was putting out."

By the late '70s, Barnes was also turning out his own dub projects, and he put out plate after plate of bass-heavy instrumentals flavored with his own set of influences. Among the most definitive are the 1977 albums *African Roots Act I* and *Tribesman Assault*, which paired smashing Tubby-style drum echoes with distinctly American funk-style breakbeats. "The drum and bass patterns are very unusual," says Hurford. "They're more like Lee Perry's instead of the Studio One sound that was more popular at the time." Barnes has fond memories of those sessions. "I really love dub music. I'm a dub fanatic," he confesses. "Working in the studio, people want to sing on a track you're working on. But with dub you're just being guided by the music, and you get a different story out of it."

GOING INTERNATIONAL

Securing distribution for Wackie's records was difficult in an indifferent market like the US. "We never had nobody behind us, but I believed in the records," says Barnes. "Just me and the best I could do, hoping people would find it and like what we was putting out." It didn't help that Barnes rarely pressed more than 500 copies, but things were even more difficult in places like England and Jamaica. "There was always a bias against anything that wasn't made in Jamaica," says Ray Cheddae, one of Wackie's few distributors in the UK. "Even things produced in this country were looked down on, so reggae from New York wasn't regarded very highly."

Still, it was Cheddae who licensed and distributed Barnes's releases through shops like Earl Moody's and Honest John's in London. And it was there that Basic Channel's founders, Maurizio Von Oswald and Mark Ernestus, were introduced to Wackies in the early '80s. "The re-releases they're putting out are from a very specific period, and they exemplify Bullwackie's raw, minimalist sound," says Cheddae. "The Basic Channel guys really understood that and incorporated that vibe into their own music. Basic Channel is subsonic Wackies, really."

The Basic Channel releases are culled from Barnes's early-to-mid-'80s output, part of an ongoing program to release the entire Wackies catalogue, and they do an outstanding job of showcasing the producer's unique take on the Jamaican sound. Some, like the Meditations' stunning 1981 album *I Love Jah*, sound like classic Jamaican recordings from a much earlier period.

The sharp quality of the Wackies releases and longevity of Barnes's career stand in contrast to the toll he paid for his steadfast focus on the music he loved. At various times throughout the '70s and '80s, Barnes's studios occupied five different locations around New York and New Jersey, including a leaky Bronx basement that flooded, ruining some of his equipment, and a storefront that briefly functioned as the label's record shop. Frequently choosing to pay rent on his studio over the electric bill on his apartment, Barnes even slept on the floor of his drum room for a time after he lost an apartment.

Strong work in the late '80s, including two years worth of material Barnes recorded with Studio One legend Jackie Mittoo, had to be shelved after the keyboardist's death in 1990. A move to Jamaica to establish a distribution company with Sugar Minott in the following years ended in frustration. "Sugar's been a good friend, but after being away from Jamaica for so long, it's hard to work like that," says Barnes. "Things move so fast in a commercial studio, they're over before it's done. In New York, I can take more time with the work and let things develop."

In 2003, things seem to have finally settled for Barnes. He's genuinely pleased with the recognition of his past work, and the sudden interest it's brought gives him the impetus to move forward. "I'm very happy and confident with the work we've started doing," he says, describing the vibe of his new studio. "People come into this room and they tell me it remind them of a room that make a hit sound."

This isn't just a boast. One of his new singles recorded there, a roots tune called "Sweetness" is already at number one on the local Caribbean station. And several more songs from his newly established Plush records imprint have elbowed their way onto the heavily dancehall dominated local charts.

"I guess I was just working ahead of my time," he sighs, reflecting on the long road he's walked. "But I'm really happy about it, because it puts me back to how I felt in the beginning." ❖

For more on Lloyd Barnes and the Wackies label, check the excellent reggae website,

www.jahsonic.com. For a complete list of recently repressed Wackies releases go to

www.efamedien.com. "Wack Rap" was recently reissued on San Francisco's Re-Joint Recordings.



"I GUESS I WAS JUST WORKING AHEAD OF MY TIME. BUT I'M REALLY HAPPY ABOUT IT, BECAUSE IT PUTS ME BACK TO HOW I FELT IN THE BEGINNING."



1. Chosen Brothers—Mash Down
Babylon
Milton Henry and Bullwackie himself sing a mournful chant against Babylon to bell tone-like keys and totally submerged bass.

2. Sugar Minott—International Herb (original slow cut)
Off all the Wackies artists, Sugar Minott spent a tremendous amount of time with Bullwackie. The result is a very unusual roots tune, more jazzy and complex than the pervading style at the time

3. Junior Delahaye—Working Hard for the Rent Man
One of the first reggae drum-machine tunes circa 1981. Created on the obscure Boss DR 55, a short-lived Roland subsidiary.

4. Milton Henry—Who Do You Think I Am?
The six-foot-six singer's larger-than-life sound and huge voice is characteristic of Wackie's style of wrapping the production around an extreme element, a tactic also used by Lee "Scratch" Perry.

5. Al Moodie—Bullbay Jumpin'
A rough, dark, almost classic Bob Marley-style song and vocal on the flip side of an early version of Horace Andy's "Money Money."

THE WACKIES FANATIC'S TOP 10 STANDOUT SONGS THAT BEST EXEMPLIFY THE TIMELESS WACKIES APPROACH.

6. Love Joys—Stranger
Bullwackie's take on lover's rock, with a jazzy soul style that was absent from the more playful school-girl style that was popular in Jamaica and England at the time.

7. Naggo Morris—You Rest on My Mind
Another extreme roots-style voice contrasted with Bullwackie's black and white production.

8. Wayne Jarrett—Praise Jah Jah
The roots of Basic Channel can be found beneath Jarrett's nasal delivery, which rides deeply submerged bass rhythms that swell up out of nowhere like sonar readings.

9. Jah Batta—Cool Runnings
Another unusual Wackies vocalist modeled on Brigadeer Jerry's "singjay" style of DJing—not really singing, but not really toasting either.

10. Leroy Sibbles—This World
Another big vocal style matched up with a really rugged rhythm. When that rhythm drops, Sibbles voice just picks it back up.

“YOU GET THIS NEW

TOY, AND PLAY

WITH IT UNTIL

YOU GET BORED,

AND YOU

DISCOVER THAT

YOUR WOODEN

TOY WAS MUCH

MORE FUN”



Cibelle Cavalli (vocalist and musician)

XLR8R: *What is the future of electronic music in Brazil?*
CC: I think it will be less electronic. Now everyone has a home studio, cracked plug-ins, loads of inspiration, etc. But you get this new toy, and play with it until you get bored, and you discover that your wooden toy was much more fun.

XLR8R: *Who are your favorite artists from outside of Brazil?*
CC: Björk—electronic, yet organic.



Ram Science (drum & bass/techno DJ and producer)

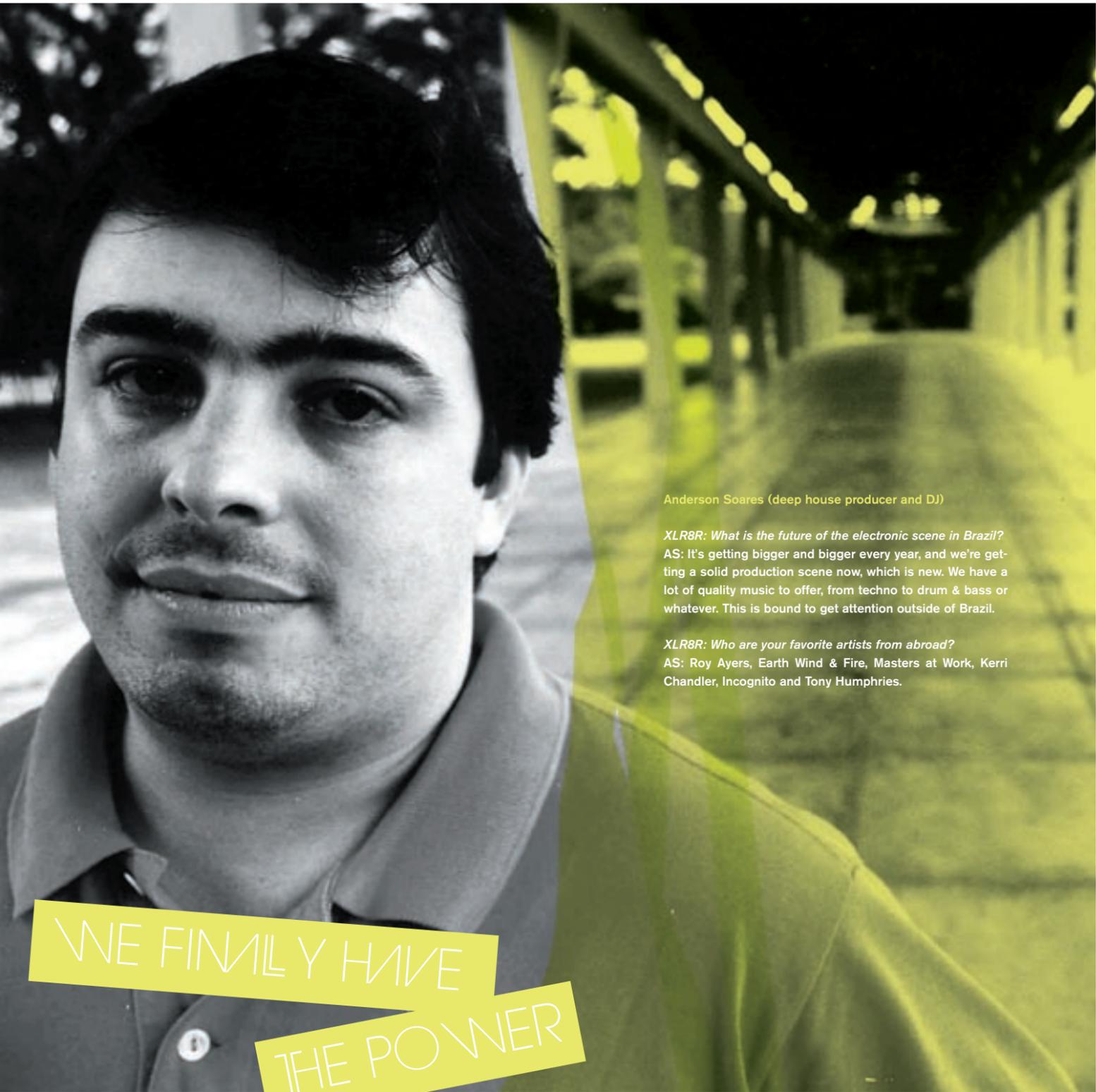
XLR8R: *What do you think of Lula?*
RS: He's a fighter and has managed to overcome all of the difficulties in his life. He's been through a lot, and he can relate to poor families in Brazil and give them the opportunity to have something.

XLR8R: *What is the future of electronic music in Brazil?*
RS: Each day the scene increases and gets more acknowledgement within our society. Now we've reached a point where our biggest singer, Roberto Carlos, is inviting DJs like me to remix his songs from the '70s and '80s.

TALKING TO PRODUCERS AND TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS—BRAZIL STYLE!
WORDS & IMAGES PAUL SULLIVAN

BRAZIL'S ELECTRONIC MUSIC has gone from strength to strength in the last five years. V Recordings artists Marky and Patife have shot from the Sao Paulo underground into the global stratosphere thanks to their brand of hi-octane drum & bass. Others—like tech house maestro Mau Mau, techno guru Anderson Noize, d & b stalwart Ram Science, chanteuses Cibelle Cavalli and Patricia Marx and deep house don Anderson Soares—have been making waves abroad and solidifying the scene at home.

That musical emergence has been paralleled by radical political developments at home. With its food and fuel costs skyrocketing and the average wage stagnating, Brazil recently elected leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as president. US and foreign investors are not terribly pleased to have a socialist leader in Brazil, but how do the natives feel? *XLR8R* dropped into town and got the lowdown. ▶



Anderson Soares (deep house producer and DJ)

XLR8R: What is the future of the electronic scene in Brazil?

AS: It's getting bigger and bigger every year, and we're getting a solid production scene now, which is new. We have a lot of quality music to offer, from techno to drum & bass or whatever. This is bound to get attention outside of Brazil.

XLR8R: Who are your favorite artists from abroad?

AS: Roy Ayers, Earth Wind & Fire, Masters at Work, Kerri Chandler, Incognito and Tony Humphries.

WE FINALLY HAVE
THE POWER

TO SHOW THE



Mau Mau (tech house DJ and producer)

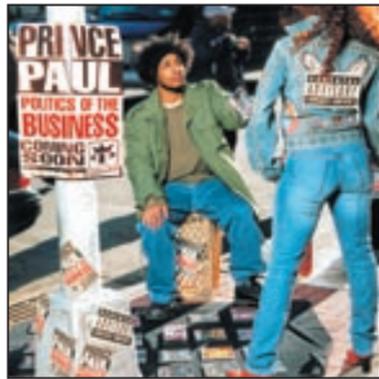
XLR8R: What is the future of electronic music in Brazil?

MM: There are constantly new producers coming up here in Brazil. We finally have the power to show the rest of the world our productions, and the Brazilian press, radio and TV are paying more attention and giving us more space for national programs on electronic music.

XLR8R: Who are your favorite artists from abroad?

MM: I like Jeff Mills, Carl Craig, Mark Broom, Aubrey and Laurent Garnier.

REST OF THE WORLD
OUR PRODUCTIONS

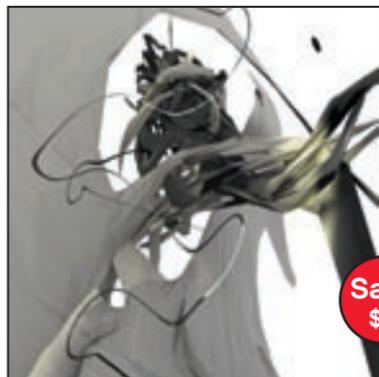


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CEX BEING RIDDEN Temporary Residence/US/CD

Rjyan Kidwell makes me feel mad old. He's barely into his twenties, and *Being Ridden* is the fourth full-length he's dropped under the Cex name in as many years. Having mastered clank & grind IDM and goofball-white-man's party rap on his previous albums, Kidwell now keeps the mic in one hand, the acoustic guitar in the other and the laptop nearby. While last year's *Tall, Dark and Handcuffed* alternated between somewhat one-dimensional party jams and upbeat excavations of childhood and high school memories, *Being Ridden* is somewhat darker and as such automatically demands to be taken more seriously, fair or not.

However, the darker notes are well integrated into *Being Ridden's* grab bag of styles. Kidwell has gained confidence in his slightly awkward voice as a singer and rapper, and while he'll never be Rakim on the mic, he can sit comfortably next to other melanin-challenged rappers like Gold Chains and Princess Superstar. But while those two sport cartoonish personas on wax, Cex successfully inverts the Kool Keith formula: where Keith's many alter-egos serve to push outward aspects of his personality to outrageous heights, Kidwell uses the dichotomy between himself and Cex as a way to mine his inner depths.

To that end, Cex has kept his beats next-level and branched out, sneaking acoustic guitars in and around the rhythms, dropping in unedited field recordings

as a breather ("Other Countries"), holding back from rhyming for an intense spoken-word style on the opener "The Wayback Machine," and contrasting guest Craig Wedren's shimmering croon with his own punkish howl. Venetian Snares shows up to add threatening violins and cellos to "Stamina," a two-minute burst of high-wire braggadocio that underlines the new wrinkles. Even when Cex is giving the "middle finger to the indie rock singer" and wack MCs, we can hear him thrashing against his fear that he just might be one himself.

When Kidwell poses à la David Bowie's *Heroes* on the cover, he's clowning but simultaneously tipping his well-posed hands: just as Bowie's late-'70s Berlin trilogy found him assimilating his runaway personas into one complex artist, *Being Ridden* finds Kidwell/Cex achieving synergistic power. On "Earth Shaking Event," Kidwell sandblasts away the depression caused by a breakup by throwing on his Cex cape, then immediately turns around and explains how he keeps "the real Rjyan safe" by keeping "Cex at Arm's Length."

Technically, a record that's as all over the map of styles as *Being Ridden* has no business being loved by anyone but self-styled eclectics, but it coheres around Cex's ability to swing from strangely morbid stories, through haunting instrumentals, to bassbin-rattling indie-rap jams, and come out on the other side of catharsis. Kidwell is aiming at unedited truth, and on *Being Ridden* he's getting close. By the end I don't feel so old anymore. *Rob Geary*



Christopher Woodcock

ADRIAN SHERWOOD NEVER TRUST A HIPPIE
Real World/US/CD

Using subtle filters, complicated audio transformations and stereo manipulations, London dub hooligan Adrian Sherwood brings the music into the 21st century. Sherwood's been around for a long time, using his On-U-Sound label and collaborations with others on a variety of projects, among them Tackhead, Dub Syndicate, Bim Sherman and Samia Farah. On what is remarkably his first solo album after two decades of collaborative productions, he keeps the quality level high while paying even more attention to the minutia. Though it has to be categorized as a dub album, the rhythms are driving and dancehall-inflected, rarely falling into dub's laid-back, blissed-out groove.

Guests like Sly & Robbie validate the reggae grooves, while Pakistan's Rizwan-Muazzam Qawwali brings a Middle-Eastern flavor that adds to the already worldly selections. While remaining respectful to dub's roots, Sherwood generates innovative ideas in each song—like it or not, you have to respect his experimentation. *Never* is an album that blossoms with each listening. *Jesse Terry*

3 GENERATIONS WALKING
Spiritual Life Music/US/CD

3 Generations Walking blends jazzy vocals, a bit of house, and an instrumental bag of tricks (cello, congas, kalimba, and violin) to achieve a pleasantly celestial album. Granola house or jamband jazz? Not quite either. Cellist Erin Snider provides a sense of spiritual depth to most tracks, while vocalist Christiane D. reaches for the sky on virtually every track. While track titles such as "Glory," "Believe," "Meditation" and "Love Always Love" almost always inevitably lead down a saccharine path best left untraveled, 3GW manages to pull back from the brink, especially on "Love Always Love," a slightly funky surprise. *Margaret Murray*

808 STATE OUTPOST TRANSMISSION
Shadow/US/CD

Where does techno go after it's been framed and hung in a gallery? As with their last release (1996's *Don Solaris*), Manchester's modern masters lay it on thick, this time with a fresh palette. There are a few familiar notes and devices, such as employing multiple guest vocalists like Simian, Elbow and Alabama 3, all of whom produce great results. But it's drastic shape-shifts and an increased intensity that mark 808's return. The tone of "Soufflex," for example, glides effortlessly between martyr and menace. Can a Vatican commission be far behind? *Dan Slicko*

ACCELERA DECK ECHO ECONOMY
Toast and Jam/US/CD

This Accelera Deck re-release feels like a series of still-lives of rusty scraps of crumpled metal, each portrait a slight variation on another, threaded together into animation. Its abruptness is a distinct departure from other Accelera Deck works in which sheets of delicate ambience unroll on top of tiny, skittering beats. "dloop2" is a garbage-can tumble, and "dloop3" features a controlled and measured clock ticking while a rumbling chaos churns at the edges of earshot. *Echo Economy's* minimal loops are variations on a sparse theme, with each component slightly shifted, nudged, elongated or eliminated per iteration. The sheer number of permutations is impressive, if not kind to the ears. *Selena Hsu*

ADULT ANXIETY ALWAYS
Erstaz Audio/US/CD

When you get the paranoid sense that these 21st-century schemes have us all stuck in a future gone stark-flippin' wrong, it's nice to severely nod your head to some Adult. and pretend to laugh at yourself while blowing off legitimate steam at the same time. Following up their debut full-length, *Resuscitation*, husband and wife Nicola Kuperus and Adam

ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM ANTI-POP VS MATTHEW SHIPP
DJ SPOOKY WITH MAD PROFESSOR DUBTOMETRY
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

A double whammy of experimental pianist Matthew Shipp-influenced beat science from some of the most practiced in experimental beats results in a woozy, engaging affair. *Dubtometry* only begins with Spooky and Mad Professor, extending into Lee Perry's crazy vocals, relying on real instrumentation from Shipp and others, and ending with remixes from I-Sound, Negativland, and Karsh Kale! Suddenly an Anti-Pop-Shipp collaboration seems simple. A natural evolution for the hip-hop ex-kings of improvised beats, *Anti-Pop Vs Matthew Shipp* has awesome moments melding real instruments with cold, futuristic beats, while an occasional verse from Priest and Beans keep it human. But where's M Sayyid? He just represents what's missing from all this avant-garde futurism—charisma. *Jon Weldon*

BAD COMPANY UK SHOT DOWN ON SAFARI
System/US/CD

I interviewed Bad Company for *XLR8R* a few years ago, and they are nice guys. They've been making some of the meanest sounding shit I've ever heard for years now, but they still manage to sneak in some funky little polyrhythms and the odd soulful track here and there for flavor. Ripping basslines and chopped up amens are in evidence as always, but hey, Bad Company is nothing if not consistent. Just check out the included bonus *Best Of The Bad* mixed-CD if you don't believe me. *James Friedman*

BLUEPRINT THE WEIGHT ROOM
Weightless/US/CD

Columbus, Ohio emcee/producer goes to bat for himself with his debut solo release *The Weight Room* featuring his production and a host of guest emcees. Best known for his Soul Position EP with RJD2 and his opening slot on Atmosphere's last tour, Blueprint has a solid presence in the underground. His highly enunciated, verging-on overly-dramatic rhyme style complements his slow and operatic production beautifully, and the outcome is dope. But all the guests make the album less of a cohesive project than it could have been with Blueprint on beats and rhymes. Established artists like Vest Aire on "I.C.U." and The Orphanage featuring Aesop Rock and Slug on "Obsolete" outshine most of Blueprint's lesser-known collaborators like Bru Lei, Bahdaddy Shabazz and CJ the Cynic. *DJ Anna*

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL THE GREAT OUTDOORS
Surrender/UK/CD

Surrender is a new label from the UK's Visible Noise stable, home to punk-metal outfit Lost Prophets. This—Bridge and Tunnel's third album—will be Surrender's first release. The duo responsible for the first two B & T long-players—singer Nathan Bennett and German producer Mark Bihler—has now expanded to include Kevin Williams (guitar) and Nico Lippolis (drums). And, if you can imagine Spiritualized led by Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie—with, unfortunately, less original ideas than either of these bands—you can probably live without *The Great Outdoors*. *Dave Stenton*

DENNIS BROWN THE PROMISED LAND 1977-1979
Blood & Fire/UK/CD

Like nearly all Dennis Brown albums, the *Promised Land* has a mix of great tunes and filler tracks: in general this is an above-average to very good collection. For roots reggae fans, the backing tracks are uniformly stellar Studio One creations, featuring the best of the best: Sly, Robbie, Horsemouth, Chinna, Sticky, Flabba and more. This collection combines *Joseph's Coat of Many Colours* and various singles from Brown's own DEB label in the late '70s. As usual, *Blood & Fire's* reissue packaging is excellent, loaded with great liner notes, an interview with Brown and more. The Crown Prince of Reggae is gone but never forgotten. *Jesse Terry*

BURNING SPEAR ORIGINAL LIVING DUB VOL. 1
LIVE AT MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL 2001
Burning Music/US/CD

There are a handful of artists who have been making deep roots reggae since the genre began to form from the remains of ska and rocksteady. Winston Rodney is one. Burning Spear is often mistaken for a band, and while Rodney tours and plays with a revolving group of players (including many of Jamaica's stalwarts: Sly & Robbie, Aston "Family Man" Barrett, Hopeton UNDO, and Earl "Chinna" Smith), he is Burning Spear. His new US-based label has released two irresistible platters. His set at Montreux is delicately recorded, and the long, percussion heavy rendition of "Jah Nuh Dead" is a real treat, with duelling congas and piano scraping their way out of the echo box. Two of Spear's anthems, "Slavery Days" and "Old Marcus," are played to perfection. *Original Living Dub* disappeared into the dub chamber in 1978, never to be found until now. The track "Associate" is a sound-murdering dub of "Social Living," a Spear classic, and the rest of the material here is sheer studio pressure—just try taking a breath. *Tim Haslett*

DANIEL CARTER + REUBEN RADDING LUMINESCENCE
Aum Fidelity/US/CD

Two stellar musicians present a soaring sonic convergence. Carter's countless associations include Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor, Sonic Youth and William Parker, while Radding has worked with John

Zorn and Wayne Horvitz, among others. This duet, however, is a rare and timeless pairing. When bassist Reuben Radding brought multi-instrumentalist Daniel Carter to Seattle shortly after 9/11, Carter brought only his alto saxophone, saying that it "helped create a kind of simplicity, focus, and relative quietude." How can a record be so primal and filled with emotion, and yet be so peaceful? You'll listen repeatedly to find out. *Fitz Gittler*

CLUE TO KALO COME HERE WHEN YOU SLEEPWALK
Mush/US/CD

Many songs suggest or inspire movement—only a select few have movements. The songs on the Mush Records debut of Australian Mark Mitchell—who works as Clue To Kalo—breathe, blink, shift and shudder in a gauzy weave of dewy casiotone melodies and laptop morphs. *Sleepwalk* is a charming digital diary of sunny, soft-focus cascades over loose knots of drum patterns, sometimes aggressive yearning, sometimes timid, never fey. A momentary departure from Mush's ambitious hip-hop abstractica, Clue To Kalo would actually seem more suited to Morr Music or Plug Research, akin to Müm, Ms. John Soda, Pulse Programming and DNTEL, increasingly accessible to indie pop fans. Regardless of where Clue To Kalo sits, Mitchell's music won't stay still long, propelled as it is by fluid, optimistic, nervous energy and circulated by/to listeners of taste. *Tony Ware*

CORKER/CONBOY IN LIGHT OF THAT LEARNT LATER
Vertical Form/UK/CD

Adrien Corker and Paul Conboy, often recording as Soul Circuit, have recorded numerous film and video soundtracks, so perhaps it's not surprising that their full-length debut for Vertical Form is rich with cinematic overtones. Long passages of acoustic guitar or vibraphone spool out as carefully as film from a reel, chiming pedal tones hang orange dusk on the horizon, slow crackles and halfnotes hide forgotten histories behind their incidental nature. A departure for Vertical Form, *Light* carries echoes of Tortoise, Morricone and even Talk Talk, but it's hardly just another remake. Slip into a world where the screen never goes dark. *Philip Sherburne*

CUNNINGLYQUISTS SOUTHERNUNDERGROUND
Freshchest/US/CD

The word "ruthless" might be common coin in descriptions of Southern underground rap, which is known for pungent, whiskey-sluiced rhymes and gravelly beats. While Cunninlyquists exalt the swampy sounds of their homeland, their second LP lapses into more groove-driven boom-bap overlaid with strings, blues contralto samples and melancholy piano. Rhymes oscillate from buoyant MC prattle about Cadillac grilles—as in their infectious homage track for "The South"—to angst-riddled soliloquies about the creeping hand of war. But for the occasional cliché—like the gauche yee-haw from "DJ Billy Bob"—Cunninlyquists have a peppery wit and a knack for double entendre. *Rachel Swan*

TAYLOR DEUPREE AND KENNETH KIRSCHNER POST_PIANO
Sub Rosa/BEL/CD

A newcomer to recorded music, Kenneth Kirschner's actually been working with experimental piano and electronics as long as college friend and collaborator Taylor Deupree (that is, for over a decade), and this is a captivating debut. *Post_Piano* functions on three levels: the first is a singular, rather noisy sample of a piano note, provided here in .aiff and MP3 formats; the second is a series of full-tonal-range compositions Kirschner composed from that sample (also in MP3); and third is Taylor Deupree's digital experimentation with those compositions (actual CD tracks). So as Deupree's Oval-ish treatments provide inspiration, you can use the .aiff file to craft your own versions. Beautiful music, and so much to do with it. *Heath K. Hignight*

DIEGO INSTANT REALITY
Kanzleramt/GER/CD

Twenty-two-year-old Diego Hostettler can build his tracks like his Kanzleramt protégé, Switzerland's hard techno/house superstar Alexander Kowalski. But it's lack of stylistic maturity makes *Instant Reality* only marginally more than an afterthought compared to Kowalski. It's the surgical cleanliness of Diego's source material—they're the same synth notes, the same arpeggios, the same breakneck techno rhythms. But *Instant Reality* lacks the scratchy, rough-around-the-edges quality that makes Kowalski's pounding *Progress LP* sound truly battle-tested. Why the comparison? Because Diego Hostettler is only 22, and it's clear that *Instant Reality* is most likely just a stepping-stone to a truly wicked new techno. *Heath K. Hignight*

DJ CAM SOULSHINE
Koch/US/CD

Soulshine is Cam's reflection on US r&b and soul (there's even a tribute to Aaliyah), a side-step from his previous hip-hop-centric approach and hard-hitting jazz cutups. More grounded than his *Loa Project* trilogy, Cam uses a slew of guest players and vocalists to good effect here, centered around minimal, laidback grooves. The DJ Premier remix of "Voodoo Child" makes this all the more evident—it's the oldest cut here, and is much more in your face than the sophisticated r&b rubric motivating the bulk of the album. He hits the mark with "Love Junkie," which features Cameo's Larry Blackmon working the tune into a nugget that should rocks bed-

rooms from west to east. The smoky soul of China's voice on "He's Gone" is another highlight, along with the masterfully skittering collaboration with Atlanta's Donnie on "Elevation." Cam's meandered in various directions since his impressive early catalog—*Soulshine* is a welcome new focus. *Joe Rice*

DJ SCUD AMBUSH
Rephlex/UK/CD

Breakbeat completists of the world, rejoice! *Ambush!* collects the best of hardcore mentalist DJ Scud's overdriven dancehall/jungle/breakbeat mayhem, originally released across a slew of 7" and 12"s from labels like Ambush, Full Watts and Klangkrieg. Ambush—South London's Toby Reynolds—fuses unrefined rave bombast, raw ragga violence, and ruffneck jungle into a lumbering beast that's as sexy as it is ragged. Call it "breakcore" if you wish—but really, DJ Scud's bulleted-riddled riddims are less the product of a new subgenre than a manifestation of a *supergenre*, subsuming all elements of the hardcore continuum into a form that is neither retro nor futuristic, but simply immediate, gripping, and ultra-fucking-now. *Philip Sherburne*

DORINE MURAILLE MANI
Fat Cat/UK/CD

Imagine *Mani* as the soundtrack to a Jean-Pierre Jeunet film about Amelie's long-lost schizo sister. Artistic glitch action ripples over petite bits of cut-up instrumental sound like the flicker of Jeunet's cinematography, with surreal, abstract rhythms and melodies randomly popping out of the crackling ether. Three super-minimal piano tracks provide brief moments of stillness in the album's kinetic disorder. Producer Julien Loquet enlists the little-girl voice of Chloe Delaume, who personifies the album's folksy timbre and classical madness. The work here is emotionally unnerving, but in sweet French ways that are more mysterious and heartrending than sinister. *Liz Cordingley*

ELECTRIC COMPANY ITS HARD TO BE A BABY
Tigerbeat6/US/CD

The words "Tigerbeat6" and "mature" rarely find themselves in close proximity. And though there's plenty of wit, whimsy and DSP-fuckery to be found on *It's Hard To Be A Baby*, Brad Laner seems to suggest they aren't mutually exclusive concepts. *It's Hard* finds a comfy resting place between Mego and Mille Plateaux. "The Lifestyle" sounds like Joe Boyd's string arrangements for Nick Drake as produced by Cex. "A Good Top Tongue" slips in like DAT Politics cutting up Timbaland and Stephan Mathieu. Elsewhere, acoustic guitars weave among out-hop breaks, and white squalls cut razorlike into uneasy beats. Quite fantastic, and grown-up, too. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

LEE FIELDS PROBLEMS
Soul Fire/US/CD

I've considered Lee Fields's "I'm the Man" to be one of the finest pieces of new-school funk for years, and finally it's on an album, surrounded by songs of equal quality. Comparisons to James Brown

are inevitable given Lee's vocal style, but *Problems* is much more than an attempt to ape the Godfather. The production is perfect for this material, full of grit and open spaces, and—perhaps with a nod to future samplers—there are open drumbreaks galore. Lee's songwriting shouldn't be overlooked, either, as his attempts to bring social awareness to the dancefloor come off like early Public Enemy if P.E. had played funk instead of sampling it. *Pete Babb*

FOUR TET ROUNDS
Domino/UK/CD

If some artists make "bedroom" music, Kieran Hebden's is gloriously, unequivocally "outdoors" music. His pastoral *Pause* was summertime incarnate, hazily ripe and warm "folktronica." *Rounds* sees Four Tet again creating beauties that are at once densely swarming and breathtakingly expansive as it sets out for journeys across windy bridges by foot. It's a far more dynamic album, with chimes and leaves and scraps of static scuttling along the ground, getting swept into tiny, dizzying vortexes. Much of *Rounds* feels a shift in cycles, a change of seasons in the air. It's brisk and crisp, with staccato plucks and quivering busyness. In short, it's absolutely gorgeous. *Selena Hsu*

FREEFORM FREEFORM CONDENSED (FINEST FILETS 1995-2002)
Nonplace/GER/CD

An odd concept: Nonplace Records owner and renowned producer Burnt Friedman "edits and re-edits" select tracks from British IDM maestro Simon Pyke's vast back catalog. Seems like someone of Pyke's lofty stature wouldn't want anyone—no matter how accomplished—to mess with what are already unique specimens of complex, otherworldly aural architecture. That said, Friedman has definitely punched up and brightened Freeform's somewhat arid, intellectual constructions, so the decision to release *Condensed* on vinyl makes sense in light of this upgrade. As a career-spanning intro to Freeform's often exotic, experimental electronica, *Condensed* works wonders. *Dave Segal*

GOLD CHAINS YOUNG MISS AMERICA
Pias/FRA/CD

Gold Chains's debut full-length is full of musings on the evils of fame and crass materialism, although to try to make out any sort of linear storyline from his lyrics would be a total waste of time. Chains bounces back and forth between rapping about sex and offering social commentary, throwing in plenty of metaphors along the way. He'll talk about the state of the union, and then proposition you with a line like "*I want to do cocaine off your ass in my theater.*" The beats, co-written with Kit Clayton, are as unpredictable as the rhymes, veering wildly between punked-up glitch breakbeats, guitar-driven two-stoppers and even a Bollywood-led jiggy hip-hop number. GC is at his underground best on the pounding, punky dance numbers like "Let's Get It On" and "What Are We Looking For" but the rest of the songs are so lyric-heavy and attention-demanding that they're best served up one at a time, rather than back-to-back-to-back. *Vivian Host*



PREFUSE 73 ONE WORLD EXTINGUISHER
Warp/UK/CD

As legions of promising record producers know, the only thing more difficult than releasing a critically acclaimed debut is following it up. Dilute yourself and lose the headz. Stray too far and confuse the lot. On his follow-up to the peerless *Vocal Studies* and *Uprock Narratives*, Atlanta's Scott Herren does neither—not that he worries about it. Some background: *Vocal Studies* birthed an endless deluge of daft journalistic neologisms ("blop-hop," anyone?) as scribes and listeners alike tried in vain to pin down Herren's MPC acrobatics, wherein he Cuisinarted Divine Styler and Freestyle Fellowship's Mikah 9 over rhythm tracks that came on like Mantronix stuttering through a field of Velcro and broken-glass jazz. *One Word Extinguisher* is just Herren getting better. Which is to say, he makes insouciant beatbox music made for the summertime Brownstone stoop of your mind. And it's all his own. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

GOLDFRAPP BLACK CHERRY

Mute/UK/CD

While once we loved Alison Goldfrapp for her hypnotic ethereal lullabies, now we admire for her ascendance into a fiery queen of squelchy disco. Owing less to the upsurge of electroclash than to Goldfrapp's exorcism of the demons she kept within for her more mellow debut, *Black Cherry* is a more brutal album. While her soothing tones still crop up from time to time, the production here is far more direct and aggressive. An album made to make you sit up rather than start your slouching, this is the sound of Goldfrapp warning you to be on your toes—who knows what lies next? *Steve McLay*

GOTAN PROJECT LA REVANCHA DEL TANGO

XL—Beggars Group/US/CD

The last tango in Ibiza? While the US has been sleeping, the rest of the world has been gobbling this exceptional futuristic tango up. The France-based Gotan Project mixes chilled-out beats with an ensemble of jazz musicians, featuring the accordion-like sounds of the bandoneon. The US release features a bonus CD of stellar remixes by Peter Kruder, Tom Middleton, Kushite and Pepe Braddock. An excellent choice to summon up that mysterious earthy European vibe at your next dinner party. Don't sleep on it, sleep *with it*. *Jesse Terry*

GREENS KEEPERS PRESENT THE ZIGGY FRANKLEN RADIO SHOW

Classic Music/UK/CD

If you thought you knew what to expect from Derrick Carter's Classic Music label, think again. Sure, Chicago's Greens Keepers turn out tunes as lush, sassy and polished as labelmates Rob Mello and Tiefschwarz, but the Chi-town twosome draws on Dixieland pianos and country-fried guitar, as well as more traditional jack-tracks smacks. Still, they avoid any gimmicky taint by keeping their funk full and feisty. From slap-bass with keening falsetto to flamenco featherings to jugband thump, Greens Keepers—who also aren't afraid of a little Rhodes-touched soul—have come up with one of the most distinctly down-home house records ever. *Philip Sherburne*

TOMMY GUERRERO SOUL FOOD TAQUERIA

MoWax/UK/CD

More hammock-on-la-playa than downtown-on-the-bus, *Soul Food Taqueria* is a nice case of dubby, electric guitar-driven downtempo. Ex-pro skater Tommy Guerrero has his foot on the effects pedal and his fingers on sultry Latin inflections, arriving at dusty lo-fi soul that is seductively languid. The largely instrumental album features occasional guest vocals from Gresham Taylor and Lyrics Born. A bluesy intro and three atmospheric interludes render the ambience palpable. Nicely programmed, the songs on *Taqueria* have their own eclectic personalities, like the sandy characters you might meet ambling up from the beach to order tacos under a heavy, humid twilight. *Liz Cordingley*



I'M NOT A GUN EVERYTHING AT ONCE

City Centre Offices/GER/CD

He's a slippery character, that John Tejada. Just when you think you've got a hold on where he's coming from—along comes another project, or alias, and he wriggles free. *Everything At Once*, sees the prolific producer pair up with guitarist and bassist

Takeshi Nishimoto—with heavily folk-accented electronica the end result. Perhaps ironically, on an album dominated by subtlety and soft swathes of sound, the urgent "Make Sense And Loose"—where the guitar is underpinned by sharp beats and distorted bass growls—proves a standout, and a possible hit on the more adventurous dancefloor. *Dave Stenton*

THE LAST POETS THIS IS MADNESS

Light in the Attic/US/CD

Before hip-hop's gestation in the boroughs of New York, The Last Poets fused bongo beats and spoken word, building fervor for people whose voices were/are muzzled in popular culture. After releasing their first album in 1970, the poets garnered "griot" status, and began collaborating with the Black Panthers. Their dithyrambic verses prefigured the gritty, firebrand raps of KRS-One and Public Enemy. Laced with such classics as "Gashman," "When the Revolution Comes," and "This is Madness," new two-CD box set will appeal to armchair poetry buffs and rabble-rousers alike. *Rachel Swan*

JASON LESCALEET MATTRESSLESSNESS

Cut/ITA/CD

This first full-length from New Englander Jason Lescaleet is a stunning example of sonic shapeshifting. All but one track on this excellent disc is ostensibly an homage to a pair of artists. For example, the grainy, droning opener is dedicated to Portuguese guitarist Rafael Toral and sound artist John Hudak; the static-filled "Underscore" to lowercase adherents Taylor Deupree and Francisco Lopez; the abrasive, ear-cleansing "Straight No Chaser" to noiseniks Ron Lessard and Graham Lambkin, and so forth. These are not exercises in musical impersonation by any stretch, as Lescaleet takes each pair's work as a point of departure rather than an end in itself. He uses his vintage reel-to-reels and antiquated, distressed equipment to create pieces that are as much critiques as they are tributes. *Susanna Bolle*

LIGHTHEADED PURE THOUGHTS

CADENCE POISONS THE MINDS OF THE CHILDREN

Day By Day/US/CD

LightHeaded is a four-man crew with three hungry MCs who put an emphasis on positive rhymes. Muneshine's production underneath is upbeat and quick, flirting with disco on "Never Square," while "Pure Thoughts" brings in soul keys and a funky beat like all the

Native Tongues used to rock, pushing these able rhymers over the top. Cadence's lyrical flow is plainer than the LightHeaded crew's, but his beats are jazzy and luxurious too, relying on piano and saxophone riffs, and rubbery bass. Cadence comes with a serviceable flow somewhat reminiscent of Mike Ladd, and he takes some provocative political swings as well. *Rob Geary*

LITTLE BROTHER THE LISTENING

ABB/US/CD

Maybe now North Kakalaka will cease being just another shout-out via Little Brother's laidback indie hip-hop in the Native Tongue groove. With a lyrical delivery nestled between Q-Tip and Common—nasally, mellow flows expounding on fake hoes and false rappers—and lilting production that grooves with soulful samples and funk-laden loops, *The Listening* relies on a proven formula that keeps it simple and funky. But packing in 18 tracks is unnecessary for proven formulas, leaving the album teetering too close to monotony and falling victim to what the title track despises—aural wallpaper. *Jon Weldon*

LORY D SOUNDS NEVER SEEN

Rephlex/UK/CD

Assembled as a disjointed tracklist rather than a set, Lory D takes hard techno to its most sinister level with *Sounds Never Seen*—the name of his new album and his Italian label. From beginning to end, we hear typically plodding techno sounds programmed in very atypical ways. An experienced early-'90s producer, Lory creates an audio playground of old-school drum machines and sci-fi influenced synths all on a slight electro tip, like Morroder tracks reworked by Juan Atkins. With its robot noises, laser sounds and echo effects, *Sounds Never Seen* is on top of its game. And who doesn't love robot noises? *Julia Chan*



LUCIANO SERVE JAH

VP/US/CD

Now out of the voice of the one called Luciano comes a musical thing all courtesy of Black Scorpio studio. This anticipated release from the Manchester Messenjah is pure classic. "I Will Survive" is liveness, featuring an uncredited Sizzla sound-alike a' sing say.

Only other guest is the Prophet on "Hail King Selassie." Murderation, bredren. See right now, it's all about strictly God-hearted lyrics churned out like commaeal dumplin' over recognizable riddim tracks. Overall, it's far from 1995's *Where There Is Life* and there's some outdated 'chunes included here. He could've got a Grammy, but him nah serve no idol. *Coknl O'Dire*

MASSIVE ATTACK 100TH WINDOW

Virgin/US/CD

Back in the 1990s, a new Massive Attack album was an *event*. Now, the release of *100th Window* feels more like a cool cocktail party. A lot has changed: founding member Mushroom is long gone, and the husky-voiced Daddy Gee is on sabbatical, leaving 3D (Robert Del Naja—the white guy) in charge. The result is a dark, brooding sort of record reflecting the current world climate, featuring Sinead O' Connor on three tracks moaning of impending doom, as well as Horace Andy on two, including an especially spooky vocal turn on the driving, muted dub-thunder of "Everywhen"—one of the album's best tracks. But for all its grandeur and mystical Middle Eastern influences, there's something too polished about *100th Window*—there's virtually no trace of its hip-hop and soul roots, instead leaning toward a clean electronic production. Good album, yes. Groundbreaking, no. *Tim Pratt*

MATEO & MATOS ENTER OUR WORLD

Glasgow Underground/UK/CD

This enigmatic duo has done some notable work in their time, including the now classic "New York Style," which still mashes up deep house *and* tech-house dance floors some five years later. Instead of proffering pastiches of Afrobeat rhythms, they take the sound that so heavily influences them and injects a New York-centric vibe, which makes for some heady dance-floor fodder. *Enter Our World* is no exception. Sure, it has a little bit of fat that could be trimmed here and there, but overall, it's a seismic, rump-shaking collection of top-notch funkiness. *June Joseph*

STEPHAN MATHIEU/EKKEHARD EHLERS HEROIN (PLUS REMIXES)

Orthlorng Musork/US/CD

STEPHAN MATHIEU DIE ENTDECKUNG DES WETTERS

Lucky Kitchen/US/CD

Released as a limited edition in Staalplaat & Extrapool's excellent Brombron series, this long-promised reissue of Mathieu and Ehler's collaboration, repackaged here with an additional CD of remixes, is required listening for anyone remotely interested in modern electronic music. Weaving field recordings, live instrumentation and treated samples into a delicate brocade of woody sound, *Heroin* is like Chris Marker making a pop ambient album, encouraging among other things, the surfacing of long-forgotten memories. Remixes from Oren Ambarchi, Christian Fennesz, Kit Clayton, Nobukazu Takenura and Josef Suchy offer gorgeous reflections of the original. Double your pleasure, double your fun. Part of Lucky Kitchen's Sparkling Composers Series, Mathieu's *Die Entdeckung Des Wetters* is isolated into two sections. The first, *Touch*, played the role of sound environment for a glass exhibition held at University of Saarbrucken in July 2001. Appropriately, it features transparent drones, appearing initially as level planes, then revealing wavelike inconsistencies rather like clear panes. The second section, *Die Entdeckung Des Wetters*—also an installation—this time at an ironworks cokery—is pure, pastel, machine hum. Like machines dreaming. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



GALT MACDERMOT UP FROM THE BASEMENT: UNRELEASED TRACKS VOLS. 1 & 2

Kilmarnock/US/CD

The composer of songs such as "Let the Sunshine In" from the musical *Hair*, MacDermot has finally released these recordings from the late '60s and early '70s which comprise a precious time-capsule from our funkier era. While composing soundtracks and working as a studio musician with legendary jazz-funk drummer Bernard Purdie, he continually performed with amazing bands, and occasionally released the results himself. These are exactly the kind of grooves that have caused everybody from Pete Rock to Buckwild to sample his music. Good sweet soul cooking. *Fitz Gitler*

MANASSEH MEETS THE EQUALIZER STEP LIKE PEPPER

Select Cuts/GER/CD

Smoked-out, dusted, what have you—Nick Manasseh's latest project explores otherworldly dreamscapes punctured by thick, throbbing bass. Not that this is typical stoner music, of course. Manasseh has teamed up with longtime partner the Equalizer for yet another round of heady, tripped-out, yet surprisingly restrained dub infused with reggae and jazz. *Step Like Pepper* twists and turns plenty of organic, acoustic elements with subtle vocal snippets and lazy beats—think more along the lines of a sun-soaked afternoon in Jamaica than Snoop's *Doggy Fizzle Televizzle*-style weirdness and claustrophobia. *Christine Hsieh*

MOUNTAIN BROTHERS TRIPLE CROWN

Babygrande/US/CD

The long-awaited follow-up to their 1999 LP *Self:Volume 1*, *Triple Crown* continues the Mountain Brother tradition of excellent production, rough rhymes and lots of scratching. DJs are the star of the show in about half the tracks, like "Badbasskicks" featuring Fifth Platoon, "MB's Are Back" featuring DJ Jay-Ski, and "The Roll Rho Show" featuring Roll Rho. Styles Infinite and Peril-L drop science to a lovely blues-inspired beat on "Hostile Takeover," and producer Chops creates more magic with "Peril-L Universe" and "Birds Of Paradise." Hopefully this new record will give this hardworking crew some of the respect and exposure they deserve. *DJ Anna*

OGURUSU NORIHIDE MODERN

Carpark/US/CD

Seemingly aware of the countless failed mergers between acoustic and electronic music, Norihide's response is a much-needed erosion of both sounds into their most elementary shapes. Perhaps he effortlessly combs a sparse, skeletal beat through a few equally faint and finely sketched notes from a piano. Or maybe his most spectral ambience flutters through soft and paced folk guitars. Constantly fading away, but always with an air of absolute certainty, the eight untitled works appearing on *Modern* blur the line between analog and digital so well that the two become, without doubt, one. *Matt Eberhart*

OLLO SLEEPER

Creative Vibes/AUS/CD

I have one party trick: I'm good at picking up dialects. Not your obvious Cockneys or Alabama twangs—I'm also good at musical dialects. Or so I thought until I heard the Swedish band, Ollo, two DJ production partners named Alex and Lars. *Sleeper* is atmospheric, with a slight pop sensibility and a heady dose of jazz—a bit of moonless night with a touch of sun glinting off the snow. Imagine my surprise when I discover that Ollo is *not* Swedish, but rather the darling of Australian radio, and is currently producing an audio/visual installation for a youth/music/culture show for Australian TV. Try as I might, I couldn't find—through the intelligent glitch, media samples, and cleverly produced game-show synth sequences—a single shred of Aussie expansiveness. Maybe I should go back to that cherry stem thing. Or perhaps I should take Ollo to the next party...they're much more clever and fun than I. *Margaret Murray*



PENNY THE CLOCKFORTH MOVEMENT

Plague Language/US/CD

Penny fills an enormous void in hip-hop: sexy feminine lyricism that's as aggressive experimental as it is easily accessible. With a clean delivery like Ladybug from Digable Planets, she could just rely on the watery-smooth grain of her voice, yet she finesses the beat with all types of twisty intonations, changing paces with the quick flip of a word. Her style is steeped in Anticon weird abstraction—which, as always, teeters on falling flatly pretentious—but it's her matter-of-factness that suggests, like a DoseOne, she really might be that strange. Throw in some equally interesting Anticon-like production, and this Penny album is just about brilliant. *Jon Weldon*

PEST NECESSARY MEASURES

Ninja Tune/UK/CD

New Ninja five-piece Pest deliver their debut album, and despite the rumors, this is not nearly as groundbreaking or different as you'll be led to believe. Sounding like "mental" jazz-break-stealing magpies—but with live instruments—Pest take great delight in mangling grooves from funk, punk, and jazz into some unholy collage. This collage, though, bears all the hallmarks of someone constantly asking "wouldn't it be funny if...?" Which is all very well for a single, but doesn't work for a long player. *Necessary Measures*

sounds like Coldcut in a bad mood, or possessed by an unexplainable fit of student japery, which is potentially interesting on paper, but less so in practice. *Steve Nickolls*

P'TAAH STARING AT THE SUN

Ubiquity/US/CD

P'taah is producer Chris Brann's collective, often dubbed "nu jazz," but informed by a deeply ingrained tradition. On the one hand Brann respects tradition, composing soulful house as Ananda Project adhering to 120 BPM, double the heartbeat and intrinsically inspiring. But with P'taah, he seeks to break his own mold, while still following a lineage of compositional clarity that links Erik Satie to funk-jazz fusion to Norwegian experimental expansions. P'taah's earliest output was expressive but felt more encumbered by its agenda. *Staring at the Sun* is a more accomplished yet unfettered filter of the universal frequencies Brann's P'taah debut *Compressed Light* let shine. *Tony Ware*



RED SNAPPER RED SNAPPER

Lo/UK/CD

Red Snapper's final album is warmer and considerably more mellow. The group flanks meaty, thick grooves with an upright bass that at times serves as a solid anchor and at others a quivering catapult. "Regrettable" is striped with deep-red shadings of piano, horns and strings. "Ultraviolet's" shifty, shuffling break gives way to a funkier 4/4, moving from its initial jazziness to twinklier techno, though the flip and slap of hand against bass remains audible. "Odd Man Out" slowly oozes juice, and by the time "Four Dead Monks," a live track, dissolves into applause at the end, there's no doubt this slab of *Red Snapper*'s well-seasoned and well-done. *Selena Hsu*

REWORK FALL RIGHT NOW

Playhouse/GER/CD

With members of the Stuttgart-based four-piece Rework hailing from both France and Hungary, you should expect something a little different. With Germany's Playhouse label involved, it's pretty much guaranteed; it hasn't landed it's reputation as one of house music's most consistent and innovative imprint overnight. Rework is debut, *Fall Right Now*, merges the standouts from three previous EPs with all new works, and their amalgam of effervescent electronic grooves and spiky song writing still bears intriguing fruit. *Dave Stenton*

RF INTERNO

Odd Shaped Case/US/CD

The debut solo album from Berkeley, CA-based Ryan Francesconi works as a soundtrack for pensive, pondering times, that lets the mind drift from rigidity and schedules. A lofty, deeply atmospheric ambient musical work, *Interno* combines an assortment of electronic textures with classical and acoustic instrumentation such as the cello, violin, flute, clarinet, horns and guitar, and brandishes Balkan music as a major influence. It's a soothing, contemplative yet exploratory effort—especially surprising considering Francesconi's career as a computer programmer and application developer. He even wrote much of the software he uses to compose his music. *Interno* is an impressive start. *Tim Pratt*



SEBA PRODUCER 06

Good Looking/UK/CD

Scandinavian electronic music aficionado Seba is a multi-genre master of all things melodic and emotional. *Producer 06* focuses on the pick of smooth d&b gems he cooked up for Good Looking. "Remedy" takes healing power from a rapturous transforming synth that is draped over natural breaks and wide-eyed keys. "Soul 2000" sees kaleidoscope keys and firing beats underpin a grandiose string section. Seba calls on sometime-production partner Lotek for "So Long," where vocals agonize, heavenly keys soothe and a twisting bass engulfs all. If Seba is a forgotten man of the scene, this should act as an excellent memory-jogger. *Jon Freer*

SHARPSHOOTERS TWICE AS NICE

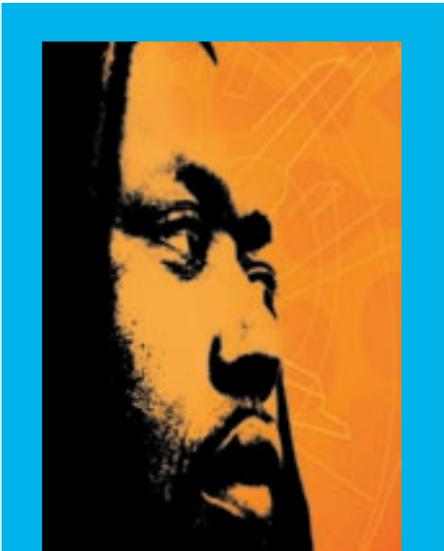
Light in the Attic/US/CD

Mr. Supreme and DJ Sureshot have deep-in-the-crates reputations that precede them, but make no mistake: this is not an obscure-vinyl wank-off. Instead, Supreme and Sureshot focus on production, fusing the best loops with live instrumentation in an appealing way. Most of the cuts are mid-tempo, groove-oriented affairs—minimalist, but not minimal. The Achilles heel is that the composition isn't as good as the production. While most songs feature terrific loops and grooves, they don't really go anywhere, and without progressions, even the best beats can become torpid. That may cut down the replay value of *Twice As Nice*, but it doesn't diminish the sonic quality of the work presented. *Pete Babb*

SHUTTLE358 UNDERSTANDING WILDLIFE

Mille Plateaux/GER/CD

What's left for a microsound experimentalist with ambient tendencies? Thankfully, more of the same: producer Dan Abrams's third Shuttle358 album, *Understanding Wildlife*, brims with the same longish bel tones that define all his work, but avoids emphasizing the absence of sound as he did on his *Frame* and eponymous *Stream* releases, on which he used field recordings made by The Quiet American. Instead, the album starts with a bouquet of colorless tones on "Finch," then quickly moves into legato pulse rhythms in "Plastination" and a quaint balance of bass-signal and lulling tre-



SUPERNATURAL THE LOST FREESTYLE FILES

Babygrande/US/CD

It's all about winning combinations: armed with mental stamina and a formidable gift o' gab, Supernatural can cut down just about any opponent and cipher as though he'd written the lyrics ahead of time. Fans have been waiting for this premiere MC's freestyle files since 1994, the year Supernatural was slated to drop an improvisational album recorded in one straight take. For reasons unexplained, Supernatural retreated into relative obscurity, and didn't unleash *The Lost Freestyle Files* until now. Like a hip-hop Shakespeare, Supernatural traces the history of his legendary battles, from duels with Craig G and Juice to his more recent amicable collaborations with Jurassic 5 and Iricscience of Dilated Peoples. Flaunting his indomitable verbal prowess, Supernatural spits rhymes about everything under the sun—from blunts, ID cards and cell phones to beleaguered rival MCs. *Rachel Swan*

ble melody on "I'm Not Afraid." *Understanding Wildlife* suggests that measured progression is one of Dan Abrams's greatest pleasures. *Heath K. Hignight*

SLEEPWALKER

Especial/JPN/CD

After a noted (and now scarce) single on Kyoto Jazz Massive's Especial label, Sleepwalker drop a corker of an album, one which may seem a bit anachronistic to the casual listener. Raspy, Rollins-esque saxman Masato Nakamura leads a group that includes keys player Hajime Yoshizawa, bassist Tomokazu Sugimoto, and drummer Noboyuki Fujii in a session closer to combo-driven pre-fusion jazz on '60s-era Impulse label release than anything one usually finds in these pages. At times it seems a fetishistic Japanese reading of the jazz idiom, but in the ferocity of the playing and obvious interplay of the musicians, one finds hints of the love of the dance. *Sleepwalker* isn't ironic and sly, nor winsome and lovely—it's a blistering set that takes the piss right out of jazz dilettantes by rediscovering the original notes. *Joe Rice*

SPACEK VINTAGE HI-TECH

!K7/US/CD

It seems the Courvoisier r&b that used to be the purview of our older, more normal siblings' bedroom missions has now become our downtime soundtrack. Spacek are a London trio on their sophomore release, providing an angular and unexpected work of neo-soul—that focus- es on the neo. "Life is like a bassline." Steve Spacek sings (almost whispers, really) in songs both knowing and personal. The beats (by Spacek, Morgan Zarate and Edmund Cavill) are deceptively minimal—seemingly simple, yet rewarding subsequent listens with unexpected sound design and a decidedly non-retro approach to arrangement. Nothing here swings like their debut single "Eve," but Spacek are still a jaded clubber's best friend. *Joe Rice*



Trüby Trio

TRÜBY TRIO

ELEVATOR MUSIC

Composi/GER/CD

Although its title initially brings to mind less-than-stellar thoughts, further inspection of Trüby Trio's debut album reveals its true meaning lies in elevation. Munich-based nu-jazz gods Trüby, Prommer and Appel have birthed a work infused with positivity and sun-drenched good times, trading in the limitations of the genre they helped create for solid musicianship and vitality. Jazz, Latin and soul influences abound, along with a host of guests that provide the jelly for Trüby & Co.'s peanut-butter production—most notably vocalist Wunmi, who brings urgency and grounding to the broken "Runnin" and the even funkier "Make A Move." But opening tracks like the smooth disco of "Love To The World" and quirky "New Music" kick things off fairly tamely, postponing any major strides until halfway through, when "A Festa" s loose Brazil & bass rhythm gives the album the edge it was sorely lacking. From then on, though, the only way is up. *Mike Battaglia*

SPECTRE PSYCHIC WARS
SENSATIONAL NATURAL SHINE
Wordsound/US/CD

Spectre's back, banging his torch-lit Kali death-stomp. This time out his growling apocalyptic hip-hop is considerably less sludgy and not as obscured by his trademark impenetrable haze. "Love" features sizzling production, its booty-shaking Bollywood princess with a grinning skull for a face, and "Blazed" features the MC Sensational rhyming over a panicky stutter of recurring throb. Highlights from Sensational's fifth full-length include "Stock Market Connection," a rollicking rap that echoes through the hollows of stark, minimal production, and "Style Notice's" beats which leap all over the place. Sensational's lyrics are uncharacteristically breezy for Wordsound—not a bad thing, but if it's a serious scorching you want, channel the *Psychic Wars*. *Selena Hsu*

STATELESS THE ART OF NO STATE

Freerange/UK/CD
The Stateless project from Sweden's Andreas Saag picks up where Swell Session, his housier project for Hollow Records, left off, with a collection of lush, jazzy house and R&B. It's not a surprise to find this on Freerange—Stateless's glossy production and slight '80s tinge fit right in with Jimpster's most recent work. Nu-jazz-phobes might at first be put off by the ultra-lush production, fattened up with swollen synths, horns and Elsa Hedberg's swooning vocals. But there's a surprising amount of subtlety and depth here, in addition to some bonafide hooks, so sink into this like you would a feather duvet. *Philip Sherburne*

SWAG NO SUCH THING

Version/US/CD
Who says robots can't get down and dirty? The latest LP from Swag (comprised of Sheffield DJ Chris Duckenfield and engineer Richard Brown) is pure android funk with a twist—crisp, clean and sharp with space-aged sound effects and futuristic grooves that borrow from Brazilian beats and downtempo conventions. From the minimal, pared-down swagger of "I Need A Freak" to the just-luscious-enough instrumental house of "Where I Belong," *No Such Thing* is a delightfully no-frills excursion into the world of android electronica. *Christine Hsieh*

SWIMMINGPOOL ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T MOVE

Combination/GER/CD
Centered on the concept of each artist "pouring their ideas into one pool," Michael Scheibenreiter (one-half of d&b duo Phoneheads) and Stefan Schwander (a.k.a. techno/house minimalist Antonelli electr.) team up in the studio to create anything but a simple fusion of drum & bass and minimal house/techno. Laying somewhere between peaceful contemplation and raw fuel for the dancefloor, the Swimmingpool project is one of subtle evolutions and surreal deconstruction. Careful to avoid the narcissistic trappings of the avante-garde, the entire album speaks from the heart without alienating the dancefloor. With varied tempos and influences that range from folk, reggae, rave and, ultimately, dub, each bit plays out like a dream, captivating in intensity and yet able to communicate on multiple levels without ever feeling forced. A masterpiece. *Chris Muniz*

SYSTEMWIDE LIVE AT THE FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTREAL

BSI/US/CD
Studio experimentation and roots reggae don't always make a tasteful melange, but Systemwide manages to straddle the line between live music and mixing board. The band's leisurely instrumentals and *geist* resonances are an anodyne for any dub-head

wary of cocktail hour downtempo and club-style fluff. In *Live at the Festival International de Jazz Montreal* Systemwide re-captures the populist spirit of dub with "Burning Dub," a languorous adaptation of The Wailer's "Burning and Looting," and "Ripe Up," a paean to marijuana. Blending African percussion with syncopated melodia, Systemwide oscillates between energetic drum & bass and chilled one-drop beats. *Rachel Swan*

TIPPER SURROUNDED
Myutopia/US/CD

Initially pigeonholed by the media as solely a breakbeat artist, London's Dave Tipper has proven exceedingly difficult to categorize. His assemblage of groundbreaking remixes and singles plus two full-lengths (for the Higher Ground and Fuel labels respectively) challenged both genre and dancefloor boundaries, garnering admiration from Miami's booty movers to the worldwide IDM massive. Here, Tipper continues that mission with an ultimately breathtaking, bonafide masterpiece enhanced by its ultra-precise 5.1 surround-sound audio format. Residing far from dancefloors, *Surrounded* fuses his usual palette of tweaked synths, interdimensional beats and gobs of body-quaking bass in tandem with orchestra, choir and acoustic instrumentation which results in a cinematic slow motion tsunami of engrossing emotion and gripping brilliance. *Brion Paul*

TRIPLE THREAT MANY STYLES

Fat Beats/US/CD
The holy trinity of West Coast turntablism forms like Voltron and drops its first LP of original material. From the first track—Shortkut's braggadocious cut and paste introduction—you know you're in for something special. After releasing mixed CDs individually, the Triple Threat crew—Shortkut, Apollo and Vinroc—come together for an album that showcases all their talents. Dope scratching is plentiful ("True Brothers"), guest emcees rhyme over sweet beats ("Ya Feelin' It" featuring Souls of Mischief), neo-soul songstresses get their groove on ("How U Talkin'?" featuring Goapele) and Triple Threat get silly with some pretty funny skits ("Aye Mang?"). DJs go line-for-line on "The Cipa" featuring Rob Swift and Roc Raida, and it appears that funky scratching is back in style. Fr-r-eee-s-s-shhhh.... *DJ Anna*

TWILIGHT CIRCUS THE ESSENTIAL COLLECTION

M/NETH/CD
Many were taken aback when longtime Legendary Pink Dot Ryan Moore entered the yawning chasm of dub music. But they were far from disappointed with the results. Moore seized upon the analog implements of Caribbean technology and created mammoth, concave exercises in the echo chamber. His unique, thunderous sounds avoid the two fatal mistakes of contemporary dub practitioners—attempting to mimic King Tubby's lo-fi aesthetic, and using racks of digital gear that result in dub "lite" (is there anything worse?). If you want your contacts blown out of your eyes, go straight to the "Lowell & Nine-Dub Plate." It's underground nuclear testing without the poison. *Tim Haslett*

STEWART WALKER + GEOFF WHITE DISCORD

Force Inc./GER/CD
TIM HECKER PRESENTS RADIO AMOR
Mille Plateaux/GER/CD
Tim Hecker, Stewart Walker and Geoff White demonstrate the art of sound sculpting—music based on the abstract, emphasizing tones and textures for chin-scratching audiophiles—in new releases from related labels Mille Plateaux and Force Inc. Montreal native

Hecker's *Presents Radio Amor* is awash in several layers of ethereal, droning sound waves and little else—you have to allow to sink in as a meditative audio exercise. It's interesting for its overwhelming sensibility, but not quite as compelling as *Discord*, a collaborative effort by Walker and White. Walker's angular intricately executed rhythmic patterns benefit from White's subtle synth-washes and melodies, resulting in a funky minimal techno record with an obvious Detroit feel. Let the sculptors keep on sculpting. *Tim Pratt*

UNAGI UNAGI

Kimosciotic/US/CD
Wow, for once a music journalist proves he can hold his own when creating the same music he criticizes. The startlingly good debut album from San Francisco's Unagi (a.k.a. Brolin Winning, who writes about hip-hop) is the kind of album you want to crank up extra loud on a sunny spring or summer day, nodding your head along to the warm, soulful hip-hop beats while enjoying the company of friends and Northern California's finest herb. The genius of *Unagi* is its simplicity, created entirely via samples and loops from a wide assortment of 1970s-era r&b and soul music, and live drum-machine playing onto a beat-up four-track recorder. All the songs are short and to the point, leaving the listener wanting more. Precisely. *Tim Pratt*

MIKA VAINIO IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND THE ONE-EYED IS KING

Touch/UK/CD
With this, his fourth solo album, Mika Vainio journeys through rather different musical terrain than in the past. Best known as one half of Pan Sonic, Vainio's signature sound is that of his custom-made analogue synthesizers, with their incisive treble tones and penetrating sub-bass. Vainio opts for a less hermetic approach here, working in a more collagist manner using field recordings, the sound of crackling vinyl, and other non-synthetic sounds in addition to his trademark synths. As a result, this record lends itself less to the Arctic metaphors that are the lifeblood of any review of Vainio's work. Thankfully, it retains the sense of foreboding, while adding a rich new vocabulary of sonic textures. *Susanna Bolle*

VEER LIDESKAPE

Source/GER/CD
Despite the glut of click/glitch-house albums emerging from Germany each month, few manage to reveal something unique and enthralling like this debut from Frankfurt's Ole Schulte (a.k.a. Veer). Initial comparisons come from the expansive, dub-drenched minimalism of Luomo and Basic Channel, but with one important distinction: heaps of funk. Old-fashioned funk, not the butchered-sample variety popularized recently by the likes of Akufen (or Todd Edwards, for that matter), but juicy, arms-flailing, waistline-contorting funk. When coupled with fragmented, abstract edges, these syncopated grooves offer a precise balance between brain and booty that makes *Lideskape* excellent for repeated listening and dancing. *Mike Battaglia*

OTTO VON SCHIRACH CHOPPED ZOMBIE FUNGUS

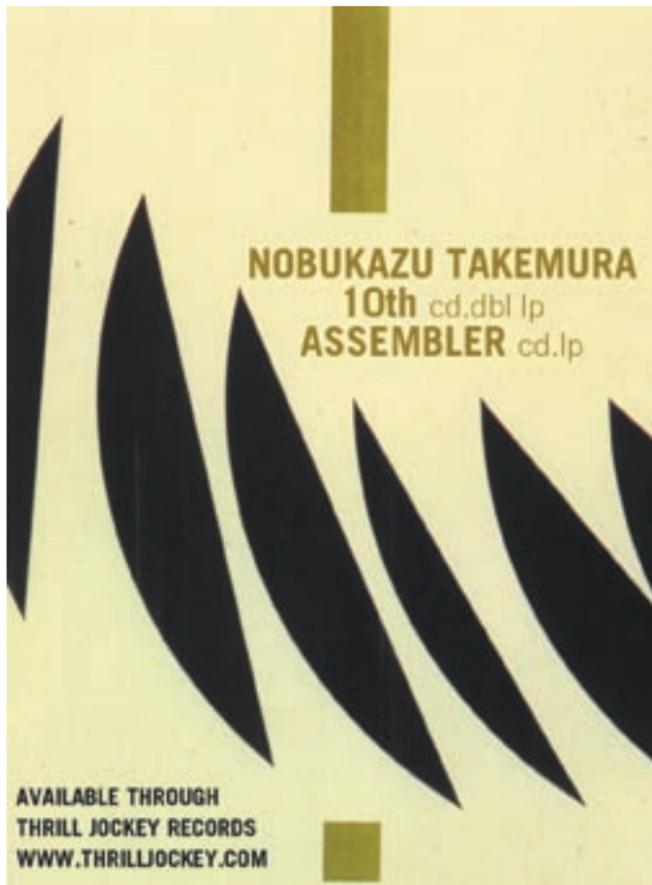
Schematic/US/CD
Over the past few years "glitch" has come into its own, weaning from the teat of academia. No doubt glitch is still a navel-gazing breast man, but now an eye's turned to the bootay, at least via Cuban-American producer Otto Von Schirach. Recording ricocheting rhythm for *Schematic*, Von Schirach mixes IDM with Miami bass-bred electro and ghetto-tech with gabba in his crispy crystal-packed bowl of baked *Chopped Zombie Fungus*. He's still plenty glitch, though, as in: Is there a synaptic glitch? Is everything firing a bit off? There are rhythms to make crowds go mental, but the impression here is that Schirach's the one gone mad. Thankfully, he leans away from self-indulgent Tigerbeat6 style frequency farts, feet planted firmly even if his head's way up and out there. Release the tit and kiss your ass goodbye. *Tony Ware*

WARMDESK GUERO VARIATIONS

Deluxe/US/CD
The story goes that Guero Variations arose from William Selman's captivation with a recording by composer Helmut Lachenmann, in which all the sounds were captured from a piano by means other than playing it. Think John Cage versus Matthew Herbert, with Selman knocking striking, and otherwise drumming up sound from a piano without touching the ivories. Should sound weird, right? Only if weird is synthy click-house like SND or MRL. "Guero (Recon)," "Guero (Spleen)," and pretty much everything else could have landed Warmdesk a deal with Force Tracks. Cool angular funk without a sad piano sound in sight, but this is altogether bouncier than anything else from *Deluxe*. *Heath K. Hignight*

ZONGAMIN

XL/US/CD
After shit-hot singles "Tunnel Music" and "Serious Trouble" (on excellent UK imprint Flesh) made him a darling among underground tastemakers such as Soulwax, Andrew Weatherall and Trevor Jackson, illustrator-cum-producer Susumu Mukai has come clean with Zongamin's keenly-awaited longplayer. Adding to what those two singles emphasized—namely, rubber-bass and stiff, elastic dance rhythms you'd hear in your imagined fantasy of The Mudd Club—Mukai adds a healthy dose of film score ambience and whimsy into the mix. "J.Shivers Theme" could pass as vintage Sound Library fare and his cover of Arrow's "Make Love Not War" embraces surf guitar for good measure. A subtle, brilliant antidote to the thick wit of electroclash. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



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SUSUMU YOKOTA OVER HEAD
Play/UK/CD
Susumu Yokota is a little bipolar. On productions for his Skintone imprint (licensed by the Leaf Label), Sublime, Exceptional and even Harthouse, he's alternated between dance music and pure ambience, exploring house, techno, disco and broken beat on the one hand, and deep, beatless sonorities on the other. *Over Head* sees Yokota's twin selves finally meeting up. The album's 10 tracks splice bells, traditional drums, mountain-spring-clear tones, and eerie, faraway voices into a careful churn propelled by techno's pulse and destabilized by broken beat's Brazilian swing. Like *Four Tet* for the dance floor, *Over Head* is possibly Yokota's best effort yet—and one of 2003's strongest releases. *Philip Sherburne*

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TOO HOT FOR SOLID STEEL
DJs On Strike/US/CD

Is *Too Hot For Solid Steel* the ultimate mash-up, or the ultimate DJ-culture political statement? It would be easy to argue both points, but there's something much more gleeful going on here.

On a basic level, *Too Hot* is a fine example of mash-up—that curiously broad music genre where bits of a recognizable nostalgic pop song are mixed with an equally recognizable dance beat to form an ironic concoction; i.e. a Nirvana hit mixed over a Run DMC drum sample.

Crafted by the deft hands of DJs On Strike's Johnny Kawasaki and DJ Suspence, *Too Hot* bears all the marks of protean mash-up masters Coldcut and DJ Food—for whose *Solid Steel* radio show it was originally produced—including quizzical cuts from TV shows, pop and R&B anthems of yore, and a gazillion other sound samples. All this fodder is, ostensibly, collated through rough sequencing and a little turntable magic to produce a sound-collage you simultaneously recognize but don't recognize. A funky '70s break collides with Phil Collins's "Tonight," then glances off Berlin's *Top Gun* love anthem "Take My Breath Away," only to run head-on into the front grill of Bryan Adams's sap-fest, "I Do It For You." And that's in just under a minute.

Too Hot's easily on par with LA-UK collective Mash Up Sound System (who recently released *D.I.M.*, a gem of a gabbercore compilation) or the original perpetrators of the genre,

Planet μ 's pseudonymous μ -Allstars and their vinyl-only *Criminal* comps from 2000 and 2002.

There's also a great argument to be made that DJs On Strike and *Too Hot* are the ultimate package for sabotaging the cult of the DJ. In stringing together ridiculous radio artifacts from Aerosmith, Richard Marx, Ozzy Osbourne and Elton John over a constantly shifting thread of Ninja Tune's best hip-and-trip-hop breaks, DJs On Strike remind us that the DJ isn't in the business of making music; s/he is in the business of stringing together other people's music. That DJs On Strike got their start over two years ago doing graphic weboganda depicting famous DJs as dolts—"Steamin' Poo Oakenfold," "DJ Skwibble," and Fatboy Slim with the tag "I [heart] Cocaine"—adds clarity of purpose to *Too Hot's* random assembly of cultural errata. In short, while a DJ may temporarily transcend droog status with a synergistic segue or clever fader trick, a mixtape does not an artist make.

Too Hot, which blisters the brain in recalling deteriorating pop culture memories, garners our attention instead by achieving a most wonderful zenith: it herniates the academic trainspotter. It's the kind of simulacral mess that's simultaneously ego-satisfying ("I know this track"), yet utterly confounding because attempts to cognitively map its aesthetic attributes generate dementia. It's because of fun shit like this that, in less than a generation, the DSM-III-R will have to create a whole new category for ADD-like disorders.

Heath K. Hignight



TOXIC GIRLS! NIGHTMARE FOR (13) UNLUCKY BOYSTARS
Tsunami Addiction/FRA/CD
 Is this just some self-indulgent riot grrl manifesto full of shallow, man-eating lyrics over shallower electropunk beats? Fuck no, sister, it's a kick-ass sampler of international musical curiosities: some of them fall into the shrinking gap between rock and dance, others are of the ambient/abstract/glitch ilk, and still others are novel, genre-less gems that Parisian label Tsunami Addiction has compiled from around the world for your exploratory pleasure. There are catchy retro-punk stylings by Cewecee, NYC trio The Red Lights, and queer Berliners Rhythm King and Her Friends, whose piece of the pie is a truly *nu* amalgamation of funky breaks, aggressive vocals and slide guitar. Throughout the 15 unnamed tracks, elements of no-wave, surf rock, kraut rock, lo-fi drone pop, neo-classical avant garde and all sorts of post-whatever experimentation collide. The Konki Duet's contribution for instance—two cute French and Japanese girls singing breathily over a minimal bell ritornello—is one of those novelties you just won't forget. After listening, no one will feel unlucky. *Liz Cordingley*



BLUEPRINTS 3
Slip n Slide Blue/UK/CD
 Gathering tracks from some of the most ultra-reliable labels on the globe at the moment (Ubiquity, 20:20, Guidance, Mantis) Slip n Slide Blue's latest outline of deep house and broken beats is as delightful as ever. Mixed by Aloha Pussycat Steve Jones, there's precious little here that won't enchant you. While the likes of Silicone Soul's remix of Random Factor and Q-Burn's "This Time" are serene floaty stuff, the later stages throw up a few quicker gems like Annie's "Greatest Dub" and Wordless People's squeaking exclusive "Sunrise." True house with a special twist! *Steve McLay*

BREAKBEAT SCIENCE: EXERCISE.01 (MIXED BY DJ DARÁ)
Breakbeat Science/US/CD

The overwhelming feeling of the first compilation from the Breakbeat Science imprint—which accompanies the store of the same name—is linearity. Whether the sensation of the individual tracks is melodic, pounding, ethereal or trancey, the overall effect is a smoothed-out, techno-influenced roll that would make an excellent CD for a long drive back home from the rave. Dara mixes the entire thing seamlessly, and the track list features a lot of underrated American artists, including Kaos & Karl K., Darcyde, Abstract and Pieter K. *Exercise.01* has got a lot in the way of drums, but could use a bit more bass. *Vivian Host*

BROKLYN BEATS 7" SERIES
Brooklyn Beats/US/CD

It seems NYC hasn't been content to stop at the noisy aggression of El-P's percussion, but instead appears to have befriended Alec Empire and Digital Hardcore based on this collection of dirty, rugged, industrial, chaotic beats. From droney hip-hop to tidbits of driven drum & bass buried beneath a million tons of sonic sludge to head-banging, sample-heavy gabber militancy, Brooklyn Beats leaves no rhythm safe, as the likes of I-Sound, DJ *rupture* and Rotator deliver enough sonic damage to bring the toughest raver-torn warrior down. Though its been done before, we all need reminders of the power of noise. *Jon Weldon*

CHRIS WATSON: STAR SWITCH ON
Touch/UK/CD

Unusually, *Star Switch On* features the sounds of large grouse and goat-herders, nocturnal birds and death-watch beetles. Chris Watson's lead instrument is his tape recorder: a former member of Cabaret Voltaire, Watson now specializes in natural history sound recording for radio, film and TV. Watson has previously released a pair of remarkable, Björk-feted albums—*Stepping Into The Dark* and *Outside The Circle Of Fire*—featuring his untreated wildlife recordings. For this release, his sound sources were offered to electronic illuminati like Biosphere, AER, Fennesz and Mika Vainio for processing. Though Watson's material is distanced from its original specific location, atmosphere and subject matter, his sound recordings nevertheless prompt a series of fascinating and compelling re-workings. *David Hemingway*

DANIEL BELL PRESENTS: THE BUTTON-DOWN MIND STRIKES BACK!
Logistic/FRA/CD

As DBX, Daniel Bell was responsible for a slew of techno classics, most notably, "Losing Control"—released in '94 and still played to this day. The Detroit-based Bell has not just got by on his reputation and

zip code since, though: he's released on Elevate and Intuit-Solar, as well as his own understated, but highly-rated, 7" City label. This is the second in the *Button-Down* mix series, and builds on the reputation of the (Tresor-released) first—with a near-perfect track selection that encompasses only the most forward-thinking of Europe and the United States' house/techno producers. *Dave Stenton*

DISCO D: A NIGHT AT THE BOOTY BAR VOL. 1
Tommy Boy/US/CD

Leave it to the newly neutered Tommy Boy label to cash in on a musical trend that very well may have outworn its welcome. But who can hate on Disco D? Michigan's X-rated boy wonder and former *XLR8R* cover model mixes his trademark blend of ghetto-tech and booty bass in this tight, basstastic mix. Highlights include Disco D productions such as "You Need Another Drink," "Keys to the Whip" and Disco's remix of B.G.'s "Hottest of the Hot." Are you having a booty party at your crib and the DJ hasn't shown up? Pop this baby in the CD player and watch the ladies twerk it to the floor. *DJ Anna*

DJ JS-1: GROUND MATERIAL
Yosumi/US/CD

In a world of many mediocre hip-hop compilations and producer albums featuring a million guest emcees, this album really stands out from the rest. Don't let the horrendous cover design fool ya—this LP is action-packed front to back. Underground stars (Ill Bill, Royce 5'9") Evidence and Golden Era legends (Special Ed, Kool G Rap, Masta Ace) bless the microphone, and JS-1 comes with nothing but solid production with the help of partner Dub-L. Highlights include Percee P's trademark lackadaisical rhymes on "Unstoppable" and Breez Evahtwain' and C Rayz Walz's one-two punch on "Drug In My Veins." Big Daddy Kane reinstates his reign with the classic verse he drops on "Puttin In Work." And through out it all, JS-1's cuts and scratches are impeccable, exhibiting that this veteran turntablist is still at the top of his game. *DJ Anna*



EASTENDERS: ORIENTATION
Kriztal/US/CD
 Sexy tabla and sarod bleed into electronica-inspired studio effects on *Eastenders Orientation*—a beveled reflection of Euriental diaspora. Overly-saturated tracks like Digital Jockey's "Ach ware ich ein zug, so fuhr ich in dein herz!" (whose schmaltzy synths are redolent of Erik Satie's "Gymnopedie" for piano) are complemented by more distilled arrangements like Orient Expressions' "Istanbul 1:26 am," in which a swank bongo dialogues with a jazzy saxophone. With breakneck percussion and snake-charmer harmonies, this compilation could be the soundtrack for a chic Jezebel joint, or an experimental blaxploitation film. *Rachel Swan*

FLOORPLAY 3: HOUSE BROKEN
Play/CAN/CD

Keep those dancing shoes in the box—this is the kind of stuff that makes headphones worthwhile. With a smattering of sharp, broken beat tunes buffered by deep, subdued house, *Floorplay 3* stays well away from the soporific without coming off as willfully eclectic or clever. Contributions from the likes of Titanton Duvente, the Lazy Boys and Mad Professor fuse together into a multi-faceted, intriguing sonic document rife with stuttered beats, haunting vocals and crisp percussion. An arresting mix like this deserves intent listening—missing a beat on this album would seem almost shameful. *Christine Hsieh*

FLYING FUNK
Flying Groove
Bluebird/US/CD

Bluebird Records have dug into the catalogue of the defunct Flying Dutchman to generate two compilations sure to make rare-groove lovers and break-collectors salivate. In addition to the standard jazz-funk champions (Bernard Purdie, Weldon Irvine, David Axelrod, Lonnie Liston Smith, Gil Scott-Heron) these compilations feature unexpected grooves by people like Nina Simone, Gil Evans and even Lambert, Hendricks & Bavan. Of the two, *Flying Funk* wins by a hair. Even the most dusty-fingered collectors will be happy with the surprises these collections offer. *Jesse Terry*

.ILATION
Sonig/GER/CD

This latest compilation from Cologne's eccentric Sonig imprint might well be the experimental party record of the year. From the chopped-up tirade of Wevie de Crepon's opener, "Little Bug Eyed Boy," to Mouse on Mars's devastating, gabba-infused "Violation," *.ilation* contains some insanely infectious examples of ebullient, fractured funk. There are certainly less resolutely hyperkinetic moments, as the sonic (play)ground constantly shifts beneath your feet in a pleasurable unnerving fashion. The Sonig label is well-known for its eclectic stable of artists and *.ilation* showcases this daunting array of talent in all its glory, featuring the quirky virtuosity of F.X. Randomic and the grainy sonic ambiguities of Microstoria alongside the electro-acoustic experiments of Hajsch and the inspired looniness of Fan Club Orchestra. A mind-bending good time. *Susanna Bolle*



IT'S A BERLIN THING VOL. 2
Dangerous Drums/GER/2xCD
 If the first volume of this series from last year didn't put the world on notice about Berlin hometown's exploding beat culture, this 30-track double-CD will leave no doubt that the city's truly on fire. Though Dangerous Drum's focus since it's '01 birth has ostensibly been on uptempo breakbeat, *It's a Berlin Thing Vol. 2* runs the gamut from power-breaks (ed2000 and Circuit Breaker's remix of Sir Real's "Boingers") to electro (Doigts de Poisson & Deckart's "Troubled Guirars" and DJ Vela's "Ol Witch's Jig"), to dubby and groovy breaks (Ekkotrooperz' "Roll the Bass" and Crash House Brothers' "Crash House"), to downtempo (WIPPKRIEM's "Tears"), to spoken word (Jammin' Unit vs. Sketch's "Magnetic") and much more. Think of the exploratory spirit of such legendary comps as the Kickin label's *Elements of Jazz* or Studlo K7's *Freestyle Files*, then ponder the fact that all of the artists on this comp live within a bus ride from each other. *Ron Nachmann*

JAZZ BIZNIZ 3
Counterpoint/UK/CD

Jake Behnan serves up an array of raw, gutsy jazz and cosmic underground disco treats on this compilation, whose artists take their rightful place alongside commercially renowned jazz and soul pioneers. Ola Butterfly Woods contributes "If We Do Nothing," a proactive wake up call to the people, with sweet-breathed cinematic brass and chilled, fill-laden percussion. Deep Sensation swap deep house grooves for heartfelt dancefloor jazz on "Harlem & 42nd" via luscious jazzical keys, mesmerizing sax and rustling cymbal percussion. Counterpoint has once again come up with the goods. *Jon Freer*

JON CUTLER: TURN
Distant Music/US/CD

Distant Music head honcho Jon Cutler delivers a choice selection of underground house bits that reflect his own affinity for the deep and soulful end of things. With a heavy representation of his own stellar productions, Cutler also gives the nod to artists like Dennis Ferrer, DJ Jorj, Yalopa and Richard Earnshaw, who each contribute their own vision of liquid beauty to the mix. Heavy on the vocals, Cutler touches on all corners of the underground vibe, hypnotizing with tribal beats before resurfacing with anthemic floor-killers, giving equal love to the smooth, the jazzy and the lounge vibe. Definitely worth checking. *Chris Muniz*

JUKE JOINT
Stereo Deluxe/GER/CD

Carefully thought out and seamlessly programmed, *Juke Joint* is a musical map of Boozoo Bajou's influences. All the artists featured here have something in common—a tangible love and burning passion for the sounds they create. "Ordinary Joe" by Terry Callier takes full-of-life dancing keys, muted brass and a magical organic guitar to produce a deeply touching serenade. Bazoo Bajou's own "Second To None" is a supremely tender expression of emotion, its fascinating keys and bewitching organ steal the show. Boozoo Bajou should be proud of *Juke Joint*, which has unearthed a myriad of wonderful long-lost gems. *Jon Freer*



KING BRITT: ADVERTURES IN LO-FI
BBE/UK/CD
 King Britt rescues the suffering *Beat Generation* series with this stellar record. Featuring a plethora of Philadelphia's finest emcees, poets and songbirds, the king of Philly house music gets back to his hip-hop roots. "Smoothed out" describes a lot of it, but it's not cheesy—it's sublime. From Quasimoto's helium-gas lyrics to Bahamadia's buttery flow, the rappers all come correct and the pro-

duction shines, especially on the spoken-word tracks by Rich Medina. Illadelph brethren represent lovely on "Rise and Vibe" featuring Dice Raw and "Caught Out There" featuring Capitol A. Overall, King Britt's sound is soulful and luscious and his collaborations are all on point, a refreshing release in the world of producer LPs and one of the best things this label has ever put out. *DJ Anna*

KING JAMMY'S THE RHYTHM KING: 18 DANCEHALL CLASSICS
Maximum Pressure/UK/CD

King Jammy emerged from King Tubby's tutelage to become the most popular (and prolific) producer of the '80s in Jamaica, largely due to his innovative Casio-fueled style. This compilation brings together eighteen of his hottest hiccapping digital rhythms covered in honey-voiced singing. The grooves on this compilation are more laidback than modern ragga, with performances by Johnny Osbourne, Sugar Minott, Eek-A-Mouse and Horace Andy among others. Though most of the music is strictly based on digi-riddims, Jammy is tops at making electronic beats sound soulful. Modern electronic producers could learn a thing or two from these creations. *Jesse Terry*



LE FUTURE LE FUNK
Hooj Choons/UK/CD
 Now that record stores are stuck with a glut of mediocre house music mixes, it's encouraging to know some labels are actually trying to inject some new life into the mix-CD genre. UK label Hooj, self-proclaimed "occasional providers of half decent house" fulfills its obligations with the decent *Le Future Le Funk*. Compiled and mixed by Red Jerry and Ross Cale, *Le Future* benefits from a wide range of track selections of glitzy, new-school house and techno, featuring Metro Area, Brooks, Swayzak, Mr. Velcro Fastener and Rokysopp's remix of Mekon's "Please Stay." Sure, the mix could have been whittled down to one CD but this is still a far better listen than any Ibiza-related mix. *Tim Pratt*

MARQUES WYATT: UNITED DJS OF AMERICA VOL 20
DMC/US/CD

What's left to say about the godfather of West Coast house? Known worldwide for his legendary productions, remixes and skills behind the decks, Marques Wyatt displays some of that special magic on the 20th volume of the *United DJs of America* series. With a healthy helping of soul, jazz, Afrobeat and gospel-tinged anthems at his fingers, Wyatt drops a truly uplifting mix that captures the positive vibe and energy of his bi-weekly club Deep. Showcasing cuts from cats like Dennis Ferrer, E-Smoove, Blaze, Jazztronik and Ron Trent, Wyatt keeps things steady and groovy and makes it impossible for even battle-hardened listeners to not simply bust out with a smile and start moving. Essential. *Chris Muniz*

MISS KITTEN PRESENTS: RADIO CAROLINE VOLUME 1
Mental Groove/SWIT/CD

"I will never stop dancing," declares Ms Kittin (a.k.a. Caroline Herve) midway through her first widely available mix-CD, "How can you be a DJ if you don't shake your ass in the middle of the crowd?" This collection seems intended to subtly recalibrate our expectations of the French DJ and vocalist: Kittin's breathy vocals have previously decorated electroclash records by the Hacker and Felix Da Housecat, but on this release, she looks to funky electro, minimalist house and abstract techno from the likes of Delarosa & Asora, Autechre, Kinesthesia and Panasonic for her kicks. *Radio Caroline Volume 1* affirms the mix compilation as manifesto and autobiography as well as archival artefact. For the most part, it's an absorbing mix. Ironically, Kittin's attempt to assert her personality by adding commentary to her selection of tracks occasionally breaks the spell. *David Hemingway*

PHONO ELEMENTS: 100% LIVE MIXED BY CHRISTIAN LINDER
Phono Elements/GER/CD

KANZLERAMT 3
Kanzleramt/GER/CD
 These German collections gather techno tunes that sneak into the dreamiest part of your brain. Christian Linder's mix is stark and minimal, offering soothing, echoing techno with non-cheesy trancey overtones with cuts like Holger Flinsch's old-school "Hound Cat," which sounds like it was poached from Harthouse's old catalog. More impressive is the third compilation from Heiko Laux's Kanzleramt label, which fuses state-of-the-art German production to classic Detroit stylings, delivering a startling answer to anyone who has ever wondered what the future of techno music could bring. Check Swiss breakout star Diego, whose "View From Up Here" winds up Detroit techno into a bracing minimal funk. Electrifying. *Janet Tzou*

PLUMP DJS: FABRIC LIVE. 08
SLAM: FABRIC 09
Fabric/UK/CD

Oh, pity those unfortunate souls who haven't yet had their own Fabric experience. These two discs on the Fabric record label are perhaps the best advertisement for the franchise: in short, both kick some major dancefloor ass. The Plump DJs, long revered for their intensely funky eclectic breakbeat outings, have snatched a bit of their live set madness and packed it into an energetic, balls-to-the-wall CD full of fat breaks, rumbling bass drops, chunky synth progressions and space-age sound effects. Slam fares just as well with their mix, filling 09 with loads of tech-house and techno goodies, the Scottish duo throws together an infectious, sweat-soaked mix of dancefloor killers perfect for fueling the sloppiest mid-week benders. Can't make it to London? Listen to this instead. *Christine Hsieh*



ROOTS OF DUB FUNK 3
Tanty/UK/CD
 The third release from the UK's Dub Funk Association comes across in sort of a dark, Bill Laswell vein, wrapping your brain in hissing echoes while thick basslines punch you in the gut. A range of producers works on the tracks here, including the Version City Rockers, Jah Warrior, Alpha & Omega, and the Dub Funk Association themselves. Nearly every track showcases sparsely grooving drums in the style of King Tubby or Mad Professor, with delays, sliding faders and flighty horns. Don't be misled by the title; this is some very good straight-ahead dub reggae, but it's not really funky. Should please all you 420-friendly fans out there. *Jesse Terry*

SATAMILE
Satamile/US/CD

The grinding acid assemblage of the best cuts from NYC's biggest electro label on this their retrospective comp, is speckled with unreleased goodies and tracks from as far back as '96. Prepare yourself for heavy, bass-driven electro. This ain't no minimal experimental album. Even breaks-heads will love tracks like Scape One's "Android Robotics," while Decal's "From The Inside" can do some serious dance floor damage. An emotional ride with EMS's "Take My Time" takes the edge off of the overall acid feel of this album. Remember your squatting days in that abandoned industrial site? This was your soundtrack. *DMatrix*

SOUL SUPREME: THE SATURDAY NIGHT AGENDA
Inebriated Rhythm-Grit/US/CD

At the risk of sounding like a hater, I have to admit to an insidious feeling of dread when I pick up new independent hip-hop albums. Maybe it's the fact that all the really jiggy club shit is just killing it these days (thanks Pharell!). Or, maybe I'm just getting soft. For real, I've been listening to so much Snoop and Freeway, I totally slept on *The Saturday Night Agenda*. Producer Soul Supreme comes correct with some straight-up rap shit. Revolutionary this isn't, but it's fucking great to hear cats like AG, Pete Rock, OC and Big Daddy Kane sharing the mic with up-and-comers over some of that ol' Brooklyn, head-nod style production. *James Friedman*



SUNSET NIGHTS — A COLLECTION OF DEEP JAZZ BEATS
Nutone Discos/CAN/CD
 Jazz has managed to surreptitiously infiltrate the dancefloor with stunning results. Thanks to the likes of Kruder & Dorfmeister, Trüby Trio, Attica Blues, et al, it has permeated genres as disparate as deep house, broken beat and drum & bass. *Sunset Nights* attempts to introduce the listener to a cerebral selection of sublime jazz with a club-friendly mantel. With nary a hint of snobbery, this gorgeously crafted selection includes contributions from the likes of LTJ Bukem, Jazzanova, Bazoo Bajou and Tony Allen. *June Joseph*

SWEARHEAD PRESENTS: VOLUME ONE
Swear/UK/CD

Once upon a time in a city called London, a shoe company named Swear decided to compile a CD of songs that people in their store frequently inquired about and distribute it, free of charge, to all of their customers. It's a cool idea—you've certainly got to appreciate music to entertain such an endeavor. And the compilation is even better: top-notch downtempo acts like the Sofa Surfers slip between underground hip-hop talent like Subchronicles, lesser-known world-beat producers Hipnotica, and melancholic, strangely moving pieces like "Increasing The Gravity" by Beyond Dawn, which sounds like rock music in a restless, wandering sort of mood. *Janet Tzou*



THE DIET STRYCHNINE SAMPLER
Diet Strychnine/US/CD
 Diet Strychnine is California's poisonous answer to UK breaks labels like TCR and Bochit. These guys deal in well-produced tech-house, electro and dubby breaks without a feeble beat to be found, all tempered by a good amount of bass-fueled funk. Tracks by PJ Stroller, The New Humans, bioFlava and Psylent are potent weapons for DJs looking for dancefloor bombs. A personal favorite: "Green Light Dread Bounce," Oakland-based Deep Fat Fried's tribute to late-'90s techstep that invokes the spirit of the great Johnny L. *DMatrix*

TOAST & JAM 9
Toast and Jam/US/CD

Portland electro goes cruising for a bruising. Ten artists stumble around a house of sharp metallic corners and unforgiving doorframes in the dark, accumulating the sonic equivalent of scrapes and cuts. By far the most intriguing tracks are the ones that are the most energetically masochistic: Solenoid's "Genclone 4" lurches out of every groove as soon as it settles into it, smacking itself brutally around. "She's A Doctor, Too" and "Monkey Feet," both by ML, are the most compelling, full of swaggering postures and sly hooks. *Selena Hsu*

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: MIXED BY ROB SWIFT
Six Degrees/US/CD

Hot off his acclaimed solo *Sound Event*, X-ecutioner Rob Swift proves that he holds a PhD in crate digging and selection with his volume of the *Under the Influence* series. Swift adds his personal

touch by stitching early hip-hop, funk and soul together with his own scratches. *Under the Influence* opens with a flurry of snippets before working into the meatier tracks from the likes of Marley Marl and DJ Quick. By the end, Swift confidently drops his own track and closes with two salsa joints set to boombastic beats, completing the kind of narrative that evades lesser DJs. *Rob Geary*



UNIVERSAL FUNK: RE:DONE
April/DEN/CD
 Nine of Europe's future-jazz luminaries get to grips with Universal Funk's debut. Instead of releasing a remix album with a dozen (often pointless) re-takes of three or four prime cuts, April have chosen each artist to remold a single track. Andreas Saag's uses a nifty elasticated guitar, keys that hit the nail on the head and distraught vocals from Elsa to create a heart-stopping Swell Session re-take. Cai Bojsen-Møller's remix of "Kuta" pleads for brotherly love and understanding, with heavy, swaying percussion, a gleaming synth and an intense, staring bass. A stylish remix collection to rival many original artist albums.

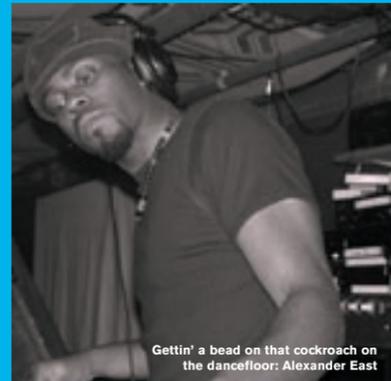
WATCH HOW THE PEOPLE THEM DANCING-UNITY SOUNDS FROM THE LONDON DANCEHALL, 1986-1989
Honest Jan's/UK/CD

Everything gone computerized! This era's when UK sounds like Saxon, Coxone and set in focus Unity invaded the dancehall scene with sick little metronome tunes. Man and man ah voice some wikkid styles, most of which are attributed to the murdered murderers Tenor Saw and Nitty Gritty. Even the comp title's taken from those fallen heroes' hits, "Ring The Alarm" and "Sweet Reggae Music." You will hear original styles from cats that blew to become Freestylers' Navigator and Ragga Twins. After the chune dem play, you can draw for the version and flash yu ownah lyrics. Beaver Kangol and whistle not included. *Cokni O'Dire*



BLACK & PROUD VOL. 1
BLACK & PROUD VOL. 2
Trikont/GER/CD

There was a time in the US when a sense of black solidarity was so strong that interracial strife was cast aside and black people would flock to see black cinema *because it was black*. That time, the late '60s, was a moment of great hope, defiance and refusal to lie down after 400 years of oppression. Sadly, in the post-nationalist present, hope is threadbare, and black unity seems nearly impossible. The wonderful Trikont label—which has reissued boatloads of obscure African-American music in their Flashbacks series—have now turned their attention to the era of black pride, and the result is two mandatory collections of fiercely political soul, reggae, and blues. If the hairs on your neck aren't standing on end at the close of Earl Sixteen's "Malcolm X," you're probably comatose. What makes these compilations invaluable is the placing of the obligatory (but brilliant), "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" by Gil Scott-Heron next to an obscure soul gem like "Song to the System" by Segments of Time. Recently revived black nationalist Detroit jazz label Tribe is represented on the plaintive "What We Need." *Tim Haslett*



Gettin' a bead on that cockroach on the dancefloor: Alexander East

HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: ALEXANDER EAST

If you find yourself jacking to classic-sounding tracks like "Jest 4 Me" and "Love Letters," just know you've come upon the ascendant sound of Alexander East. With material on 15 different labels, East has played a crucial role in distinguishing the soulful, stripped-down deep-house style of his Minneapolis home base from the more well-known Chicago, New York and San Francisco sounds. His work on imprints like Distance, Viva and Afterhours—along with top

notch tracks like "So Hi" on his own Planet East label—find this producer/DJ/singer at the peak of his game. Here's his survey of what's out there right now. *Ron Nachmann*

DAVID DURIEZ REBORN EP *Gourmet/US/12*

Gourmet offers up "spiritual awareness" from Brique Rouge label founder David Duriez. With its spoken-word message, this tightly produced record is strong enough 2 exorcise any demon on the dancefloor and dark enough 2 shine through the soul. *AE*

E-TONES MORE & MORE *Aphrodisia/US/12*

Aphrodisia releases their latest fashion from Mr. E-Tones, which I predict will be worn by many. Filtered keys weave throughout the rhythm with a female vocal suggesting that we should come on and get some more. *AE*

NYMPHONIX ARMS AROUND YOU *Celebrity Records/US/12*

Nymphonix delivers a vocal project that features a remix by Naked Music's Andy Caldwell and a dub remix by Celebrity Records co-owner Bryan Gerrard. Tastefully produced, with lush vocals giving the overall record the aromatic scent of summer. Nice! *AE*

A HUNDRED BIRDS GEORGIA

Wave/US/12
Tokyo producer Yoku corrals his reputed 15-piece (!) live group to deliver this year's sleeper summer house jam. With its symphonic strings, Balkan-style vocals and rollicking Afro-Latin-tinged rhythm, "Georgia" is got some good stew fixins. Will the global house massive bite? *Ron Nachmann*

D'MALICIOUS THE DARK TRADITION EP

Wave/US/12
Swedish producer Mikael Nordgren blends the raw energy of early '90s Detroit techno with the soulful shimmer of Stockholm house, making "The Dark Tradition EP" an extremely versatile mixing tool indeed. *Luke Magnuson*

MJ COLE WONDERING WHY (M-GEE RMXS)

Talkin Loud/UK/12
With the original version about to devastate the 2-step market, M-Gee's house mixes fully utilize the vocals of Yula backed up by a driving bass and chunky beats. *Curtis Zack*

COPYRIGHT FEAT. LISA MILLET LATE AT NIGHT

Soulfuri/US/12
UK production team Copyright teams up with the superb Lisa Millet for an action-packed track that can't fail to move you with its distinctive guitar and first-rate vocal. *Curtis Zack*

THE DEMTRIOS PROJECT

FEEL ALIVE (JON CUTLER RMXS)
MN2S/UK/12
Originally released last year, "Feel Alive" gets a timely makeover from NYC's Jon Cutler, who takes the original vocal and works it to great effect over an ultra-deep bass and sweeping pads. *Curtis Zack*

EAR LOTION FEAT. VALENTINO EP

Select/US/12
Production stalwart Ryan Tapia finally releases his Ear Lotion EP after no less than seven years of tweaking. "Ryan's Original Formula" harkens back to the early '90s warehouse sound propagated by the likes of Mr. C and Groovewinder. Watch carefully for the "Rubdown" mix by Chilton's Johnny Fiasco. *Luke Magnuson*

GOTAN PROJECT

SANTA MARIA (TOM MIDDLETON'S COSMOS MIX)
XL/UK/12
Ex-Jedi Tom Middleton adds his signature Cosmos touch to this Gallic tango trio's "Santa Maria," taken from their debut album. Middleton spices up



A Study in Contrast: Woody McBride

TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: WOODY McBRIDE

As one of the busiest and most influential names in the techno generation, Woody McBride (a.k.a. DJ ESP) had played a major role as a musical innovator and expressive political advocate. Since 1992, McBride's released over 100 timeless tracks on such labels as Bush, Hydraulix, Communique, Utilis, Holtzplatten, Missle, Drop Bass Network and many more. From deep, dark club textures to wickedly intrinsic acid loops, McBride's left lasting impressions in the development of world-class techno. Here's what he's checking for. *PRAXIS*

ADAM JAY CONFIGURED FOR DAMAGE *Communique/US/12*

Soaring across time, catching glimpses of human history, this EP aims to put the world-techno scene back in touch with its rebel roots. Jay (owner of Cro-Magnon and Azure Records) is one of very few quality Stateside techno producers these days. This one's dark and Teutonic. If you liked his Zync record, you'll dig this. *WM*

HENRIK B AVALON *Illgorhythm/SWE/12*

There's no heavier kick drum than Henrik's (I thought mine was weighty but, just my luck, my 909 is broke). Avalon's two tracks are mystical, gothic screamers that evoke Viking battles and post-apocalyptic reconciliation. It's great to see grungy Scandinavian techno evolving back into songs with structure and drama. *WM*

ARCUS P STATUS ENQUIRY *Definition/GER/12*

Arcus eats dirt for breakfast, my friends. This fantastic three-tracker takes me back to the early Injection Records or Labworks days...hard and fast, yet not another loop record. Big drums and tons of grit. How could a peace-loving guy like me dig this? Because it helps me blow off steam from my frustration with the right-wing geopolitical conspiracy. Play these tracks while you protest the Middle East takeover. *WM*

BANDO RITMO DOMESTICO EP

Primate/UK/12
Spanish techno conquistador and Patchwork founder brings his fourth title for Primate. With advanced vocal loop tactics and a brilliantly demonstrative synth lead, this project well represents the emotion behind this funk-minded artist's style. For fans of Christian Varela and current Adam Beyer. *PRAXIS*

JAMIE BISSMIRE T.B.C. EP

Chancer/UK/12
Space DJz associate Bissmire launches the first title for this concept label. Old-school East Coast-style acid loops chirp and bounce behind a high-pitched kick and a clap on four. With a floor-pummeling lead phased to perfection, this is surely a label to follow. *PRAXIS*

SVEN DEDEK & ALEX BAU

PSYCHOMECHANICS AT WORK
Predicaments/UK/12
The masterminds behind the Toneman imprint collaborate to present more percussive mania for Justin Berkovi's influential techno jam. "Psychomechanics" tests the boundaries of experimental subtractive synthesis through innovative aural soundscapes. For those seeking proper medication, search no further. *PRAXIS*

MARC DEON FREE FALL RMXS

MDEX/US/12
San Francisco-based Marc Deon brings us a versatile EP with remixes by Chad Mitchell, Tapio Schnaars and Audiovoid. Audiovoid's remix brings a bumpin', tech-trance flavor to the track. Lindsey Green goes with a minimal approach, but I keep waiting for something to grab me about it. The tech-housey mix by Chad funks it out solidly, while Tapio works it into a deep, pretty groove with jazzy elements. *Forest Green*

EL PRESIDENTE HI-FI AVAILABLE

The 89/NETH/12
The title track finds El Presidente Hi-Fi working it out with a tasteful, yet booty-shaking tech-house groove, with Latin percussion that leads to a solid breakdown laced with a horn-section riff. The flip's harder kicking tech-house jam juxtaposes the violent vocal sample, "put the fucking guns down," with a grooving, polyrhythmic arrangement. *Forest Green*

HOLGI STAR STARWARS

Kiddaz.Fm/GER/2x12
This installation marks the first artist album from this Berlin-based loop trickster. From funky live acoustic textures to tauntingly twisted vocals, Holgi Star deftly covers all the boundaries of a techno club music. Prepare your X-Wing fighter. *PRAXIS*

PER MIKAEL DUNGFAKKADUNG

G-Force/SWED/12
A bite of Gothenburg's eccentric spirit is emitted here with driving pandemonium and soulful keys reminiscent of classic Swedish techno. A hygienic and well-engineered stereo atmosphere can be heard here, with an arrogantly vibrant bassline sure to sink the hook. Flip for a Leandro Gamez remix, which adds a seamless peak-club dance. *PRAXIS*

THE OCTAGON MAN VS. DEPTH CHARGE

I DREAM
DC Recordings/UK/12
Veteran rhythm king J Saul Kane pits his identities against each other to gratifyingly irresistible results. The title track sprinkles samples of sheep bleats (you read right) over some grimy Space Invader electro, while the b-side's rough-waved "Mmm" and alienatingly ambient "Baric Void" remind us that attitude long outlasts nostalgia. *Ron Nachmann*

TWERK MOTALA

Context/US/12
Always pushing the minimal envelope and producing quality, Twerk gives birth to some sweet yet intricate, beat-driven, dub-glitche tracks on Context's 11th release, along with a beautiful ambient piece entitled "as innocent as they come." Topping it off, Context is donating all proceeds from the sale of this record to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (www.icbl.org). *Forest Green*

VINCENT D.MOO EP

Parallel Recordings/US/12
The first track on the b-side, "d.moo (2nd edition)," is a modernized glitch beatbox mix reminiscent of Kraftwerk's "Boing Boom Tschak," with some trippy piggy-snoiting noises and a super-cool bounce. On the flip is the "more funky version" of "d.moo" and a chunky and bass-heavy "Bartending." Makes ya wanna do a little jig! *Forest Green and Chris Burfine*



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"Ya wan' come test me?": DJ Flight

**DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS:
DJ FLIGHT**

It's becoming more and more obvious that drum & bass is heading into a new era in the hands of folks like DJ Flight. Inspired by the sound of vaunted female DJs Kemistry & Storm, Flight started bulking up her drum & bass collection in the mid-'90s. Playing out in the late-'90s, Flight soon scored resident spots with both the Metalheadz crew at their Sunday Sessions at Dingwalls and DJ Fabio's Swerve night. Between touring around the UK and the globe, maintaining her Next Chapter show on BBC 1XTRA, and completing her *Mind, Body & Soul* mix-CD for Defunked Records, Flight took a second to let us know what plattahs are making dem scattah. *Ron Nachmann*

**J-WALK
ANOTHER LOVER (INFLUX DATUM UK RMX)
East West/UK/12**

One of my favorite tunes of the year so far, this is remixer Gavin Influx at his finest. Phat rolling breaks, swirling chords and lush strings set the tone, soon followed by a super-sexy vocal. A killer deep bassline and touch of mentasm take things up a notch, and with the vocals weaving in and out of the mix you have a tune hot enough to steam up any dancefloor. Bad, bad, bad... *DJF*

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
WON'T GIVE UP
31 Records/UK/12**

The latest in a long succession of wicked tunes from AI intros with a stepping break laced with filtered chords and guitar riffs, slowly building with more sounds until a vocal hook and amen kick in to pick up the pace. Then a real hypnotizing b-line enters the frame at the drop. AI seem to have mastered the art of really sultry-sounding tracks that still maintain a dancefloor-friendly vibe that can fit into any set. Big tings a gwaan, as they say... *DJF*

**CALIBRE PESO
Signature/IRE/12**

With so many tunes floating around on plate but nowhere near enough being released, Calibre (one of my favorite producers!) has finally taken matters into his own hands by starting his own label, and what a way to kick things off! The latin-tinged roller "Peso," backed with the infamous, Bob Marley-sampling "My Chance," have been doing the damage on dancefloors all over the world. This is already one of the scene's best labels and its only just begun! Buy on sight!! *DJF*

**ARCHITEX FEAT. AYAH DANCE CHILD
Signal/UK/12**

Architex come on with some nicely soulful shit. The title track features Ayah singin' 'bout the music in an arrangement that's equal parts Roni Size and West London broken beat, while the flip's "Funk Odyssey" builds jump-up style on the horn riff that opened Public Enemy's "Welcome to the Terrordome." For your sheer boogie enjoyment. *Ron Nachmann*

**TOTAL SCIENCE POP PSYCHOLOGY EP
CIA/UK/12**

Total Science roll on with their CIA label, lacing their third "limited" remix 12 by giving over their emotive "Zanzibar" for a tense remix by Zero Tolerance & Beta 2, while on the flip, Baron injects even more obnoxious buzz into a remix of his own "Meet the Creeper." The real news is TS's "Pop Psychology" EP, which offers four more slices of top-notch soulful roll, touched variously by old-school chord stabs, jazz-funk samples, cyber-brutality and gorgeous editing craft. Still fresh. *Walker Lindh*

**DRUMSOUND & SIMON BASSLINE SMITH SCALLOPS
Worldwide Audio/UK/12**

**HEAVY FC
Technique/UK/12**
Andy Drumsound and Bassline launch their new Worldwide Audio Recordings imprint and continue the Technique legacy. While "Scallops" brings its own funky bass sauce, the more engagingly synth-laden "Fire Wall" on the flip is the real business. The stomping "Heavy FC" and "Big Head" are two slices of no-joke primetime soundclash business, so both of these singles provide a well-rounded picture of this crew's attitude. *Ron Nachmann*

**G-SQUAD DANCE
Muzica/UK/12**

G-Squad continue their innovation. With its churning chords, chiming atmospheres, sweet soul vocal sample, rolling rhythm and overwhelming tumbler of a bassline, "Dance" is a prime example of an energetically Zen d&b dancefloor arrangement. And watch for the flip's vertically designed, almost pogo-ready "Bonnie & Clyde," loaded with nifty electronic effects and a well-reverbed tympani drum on the one. Bam! *Hans Blixa Bargeld*

**MARTIN GADGIL PARTYKLE SCIENCE EP
Megabop/UK/12**

New Zealand-raised Londoner Gadgil offers up a much-needed atmospheric-yet-kinetic take on d & b that borders on dubby psychedelia without dipping into indulgence. The title track emphasizes whooshing electronics over bassy machismo, and works well on those merits. The flip's "Proto Clown" goes slower and more marauding, with reptilian bass blurs and ominous atmospheres, while "Days When" rolls more contemplatively electro. A gutsy group of jams. *Ron Nachmann*

**ILLSKILLZ FORGIVE MYSELF
Critical/UK/12**

On the original of this one, Austria's Dkay and Rawfull come up with a tasty combination of gentle yet grounded female vocals, lovely melodic keyboard melodies, and semi-ravey synth stabs over a festival of "Apache" breaks. So why has Dkay's overdramatic, unnecessarily built-up remix of the tune landed on the A-side? Please, next time leave well enough alone and hit us with another track. *Walker Lindh*

**MIKROB MY LOVE
Media/UK/12**

This Sao Paulo production duo have already dropped some bombs for Samboloco and Phuturo, and they continue their run for the Media label. The title's bright synth melodies and conga-soaked beat warms things up for the summer, while the slightly mellower b-side cuts touch up the same kind of intensity with some subtly jazzy/organic touches, including piano chords and soulful vocals. Tight. *Hans Blixa Bargeld*

**PENTAGON LADYBIRD
X-PLORER & DEE-PULSE NOBODY
Precision Breakbeat Research/GER/12**

Frankfurt's Precision unleash a couple more arguments against the demise of non-UK drum & bass. Japanese duo Pentagon swing two fine cuts, with the title track bouncing whooshy keyboards over a hard rhythmic skeleton, and the flip's "Fever" juggling spliced vocals on crisp beats. On "Nobody," Berlin's X-Plorer & Dee-Pulse rinse a distant, dubby vocal through some aggressive d&b, while the flip's "Clear Cut" goes cyber but funky. *Hans Blixa Bargeld*

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BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: LOES LEE

A little over a year ago, after many years of DJing and producing in her native Holland, Loes Lee launched her Moving Targets label, joining imprints like Spain's Weekend and Germany's Dangerous Drums in putting non-UK European breakbeat on the map. Six highly touted EPs later (featuring tracks and remixes from Surya, DJ Vela, 10 Sui, Dark Globe and others), Lee has gone from

strength to strength. She's launched a more tech-leaning second label, Irreversible; assembled the first volume of *Urban Revolution*, a compilation named after her weekend radio show on KINK FM; and has just finished remixes for the likes of Amb and Kemek the Dope Computer, among others. In short, the lady's on fire, accessible at www.loeslee.com, and feeling the following jams. *Ron Nachmann*

ELITE FORCE NO TURNING BACK *Whole 9 Yards/UK/12*

This tasty techy two-tracker whets your appetite for Elite Force's full-length album *No Turning Back*, out on the renowned Whole9Yards label later this year. Here's two winners for peak-time dancefloors with sexy tribal beats, classy house synths, twisted FX and lowdown dirty sub base. *LL*

MC SKIBADEE MAN-A-MAN (DEE KLINE MIX) *Rat Records/UK/12*

Big tune alert! Drum & bass star MC Skibadee calls in remix duties from breakbeat garage don DJ Dee Kline on his outstanding debut 12-inch "Man-A-Man." This is a razor-sharp full vocal, rollin', bass-heavy, breakbeat throbber. Perfect if you love your breaks dark and nasty. *LL*

MEAT KATIE AND DARK GLOBE I FEEL IT *Bedrock/UK/12*

Taken from DJ Hyper's forthcoming mix album, *Bedrock Breaks 2*, tech-breaks maestro Meat Katie teams up with London's digi-funksters Dark Globe to deliver an uncompromising, highly hypnotizing deep dancefloor corker. Sounding fat! *LL*

37HZ 37HZ

SkyDive Recordings/UK/12

The Kraymon mix is the winner on this 12-inch by Dutchman Hens Zimmerman, with a cohesive blend of elements: good breakbeats and a solid bassline landscaped with spiritual undertones. The flipside offers three edits that don't improve much on the main track, but may appeal to collectors with experimental taste. Overall, a nice piece of wax. *DMatrix*

AQUASKY VS MASTERBLASTER ALL IN CHECK

AUTOBOTS ROCKY

Botchit/UK/12

Botchit's latest singles signal the intriguing re-emergence in breakbeat of both rave and reggae elements. Yes, the tearing party vibe is still on, as heard on Backdraft's crunching, hands-in-the-air remix of Aquasky's "Through the Fire" and the marauding, stripped-down workout that is Autobot's "Rocky." But keep an ear out for hard-hitting dub aspects on such slices as Autobot's "Shed Dub," and aggressive MC tactics emerging, as shown by the large appearance of veterans Ragga Twins on Aquasky's "All In Check." Big, bad and hard, these two. *Ron Nachmann*

BREAKNECK UPLINK

TCR/UK/12

Nice to hear such a simplified sound come from a production trio on this, their fourth slab. For the title track, Pete Voyager, Tamsin and Viad throw down a grounded rhythm and top it with a sweet two-note bassline and ragga samples to create a fundamental dancefloor burner. The flip's "Chinese Burn" runs the same essentialist territory with more understated, squiggly techno effects added to the mix. *Ron Nachmann*

DJ KILLER THIS IS

Functional Breaks/UK/12

Ever feel like your breaks collection is about to become moldy and disintegrate because all your tracks have started to sound exactly alike? Spain's DJ Killer has some fresh produce for you. "This Is" and the flip's "I Want Your Love" bend today's formula while injecting some breaks and synths from the mid-'90s for a refreshingly different sound. Expect raw bass and long, drawn-out storytelling. This is dance music for your head as well as for your bottom. *DMatrix*

DJ NARROWS HOUSE OF PAIN

Octagon Dubs/UK/12

Two slabs of noir-ish, chugging UK bass, driven by heavy-handed cymbal rides and twisting, warping low-end. Narrows always tells the traditional 2-step sound to fuck right off with his



Blue skies and it's good to be me: King Britt

FEATURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: KING BRITT

You XLR8R readers need little introduction to southwest Philly's King Britt. Raised on new wave, his parents' record collection and his city's early hip-hop scene, Britt went on to tour with Digable Planets, start the fabled Ovum label with Josh Wink, and remix everyone from Tori Amos to Brandy. Two studio and two remix albums into his solo Britt/Sylk 130 career, the King has established himself as a powerhouse, especially on his latest, the impressive hip-hop expedition *Adventures in Lo-Fi*. Both his remix work on *The Philadelphia Experiment* and with ObaFunke more than qualify the man to take a broad look at today's future jams. Check the opinions. *Ron Nachmann*

VIKTER DUPLAIX MORENA (RMX) *Hollywood/US/12*

This is the best song from the *International Affairs* album that Mr. Duplaix, international man of leisure, has so elegantly crafted. "Morena" pays homage to the sun-kissed, carmel angles that bless the earth. The combinations of rhythms, textures and Vik's vocal stylings makes this *the* WMC song. This'll warm up those winter nights, brighten up those gloomy days, and make your ass shake. Great one, Vik. *KB*

OBAFUNKE BUSH WORKOUT (THE LOCKSMITH, THE BULLFIGHTER AND THE STENOGRAPHER MIX)

Karma Giraffe/UK/12

Comrade ObaFunke releases the critically acclaimed song from the debut LP. "Bush Workout" in its original form is an 18-minute Afrotech workout of future voodoo. This mix, however, takes us on a journey into sonic wonderland. Remixed by Jacksonville's Kilroy and Rliners, this epic has turned into a movie soundtrack breaking the song into 3 parts of musical mahem for headphone fanatics....fans of Björk and Stereolab will love it !!! *KB*

COMMON STAR69

MCA/US/LP-cut

"Hot sex on a platter" is the appropriate term for this sensual excursion. Common and Prince take you deep inside the psyche of seduction. Beats for your ass and a Rosario Dawson intro...wow...*KB*

ALPHAMOTIVE THUS FAR EP

Wave/US/12

Producers Brendon Moeller (a.k.a. Beat Pharmacy) and Will Thomas team up with Brit singer Dina Richardson to crank out a nice slab o' that off-boogie. The smoothly uptempo "Better Day" works wonders on the floor in both its dramatically shuffling nu-jazz and relentless house remixes, while "Not Alone" runs a nice late-night café ambience. Solid. *Ron Nachmann*

TECHNOZOIDE ESFERA

Sambaloca/BRA/12

DEMONCUSTICO SEREIA

Far Out/UK/12

Good things from Brazil! Technozoid's Rosy Aragao's precise vocal vaulting springs up and down throughout "Esfera" s smacking, Seiji-like broken drums (programmed by remixer Alpha 5), the flip is Patife-lite, sallow d&b to avoid. Demoncustico furnishes the smooth samba-house associated with Joe Clausel and Far Out's Azymuth. Hold your partner close when these play. *Tomas*

FINK PRESENTS SIDESHOW SOUND OF TODAY

Simple/UK/12

Veteran Ninja Tune producer Fin Greenall signs his Sideshow project to London's future beat-fostering Simple label. Both "Sound of Today" and "I Don't Know Why" mix clipped, alarm-clock ticking kicks and snares with dusky, sunset-hued melodies, even a little blues slide-guitar. Like former production partner Hefner, Greenall's sound is uptempo narcotic, like a bag of hash for the dancefloor. *Tomas*

FLOORPLAY 3: HOUSE BROKEN EP

Play/CAN/12

Titonot Duvante is broken techno's most fearless beat programmer right now. His infinitely funky tech-soul contribution to the new comp on Toronto's Play Records seethes with erratic snares and snorting hi-hats, as aqua waves of synth melody crash on his beat beachheads. A nice cut from Augusta, and Legion of Green Men's ambient-broken remix of Marc de Breyne further affix a blue ribbon to this remarkable collection. *Tomas*

J BOOGIE'S DUBTRONIC SCIENCE TRY ME

0m/US/12

Bay Area don Justin Boland previews his upcoming album, lacing some thumping beats, muted trumpet, buzzy flute and whooshing keys with the dolce vocals of Goapele and suave rhymes of Capital A. Old-school devotees People Under the Stairs' tight and summery hip-hop remix and King Kooba's moist 'n' dubby take round things out. But hold up—our Boogie knows the value of a bonus cut, and delivers with Gina Rene and Crown City Rockers MC Rashaan on the smooth ladies-hop of "Get The Party Started." Too sweet. *Ron Nachmann*

PLAYLIST EP: COMPILED BY JAZZANOVA

JCR/GER/12

The range that Jazzanova-Compost Records achieves with their output is only comparable to Blue Note or Atlantic during their late-'60s heights. The punchy, low-slung-bass-driven hyperactivity of Rima, Intega's stab-and-run mix of a sumptuous Underwolves vocal number, and Faze Action's samba polish of Victor Davies make for an abundant sonic palette. Pick your choice and take a spin. *Tomas*

VOOM:VOOM BABY3

Compost/GER/12

On one version of the title track of their third single, Pete Kruder and the Fauna Flash boys sprinkle some quasi-Parisian vocoder bits over an ascending, '80s-ish disco groove. The flip puts the vocals aside and lets us enjoy the irresistible yet restrained elements. Bottom line: these guys just couldn't help but put out a floor-burner. *Ron Nachmann*

REHASH MORNING B/W NUMBER FOUR

Rehash Media/US/12

The second 7" by self-described Dallas record nerds High-C and Wilson proves that Texas booty got soul, GWB excepted. As expected from a couple of diggers, the breaks are funky, but it's the atmosphere built up by lazy Rhodes vibes and gossamer trumpet that makes this record sublime. A bit scruff around the edges, but in that waking-up-after-a-bender-and-realizing-you-bagged-the-hot-bass-player sort of way. *Joe Rice*

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Ya wanna be royalty, ya gotta hustle: Prince Paul

HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS:
PRINCE PAUL

What were *you* doing at age 19? Queens, NY's Paul Huston was making hip-hop history in the mid-'80s as DJ for the music's first MC supergroup, Stetsasonic. Prince Paul's other early collabs as producer and remixer outline a distinct heritage: De La Soul's *3 Feet High and Rising*, Queen Latifah's *All Hail the Queen*, Big Daddy Kane's *It's a Big Daddy Thing*, Gravediggaz' *6 Feet Under...*the list goes on. Unlike some old-schoolers, Paul's kept in touch, hooking up in the late '90s with the Automator and Scotty Hard to put out his solo albums *Psychoanalysis: What Is It?* and *A Prince Among Thieves*. Between working with Automator in Handsome Boy Modeling School and boosting the sonics on MC Paul Barman's two albums, Paul's managed to release his best album yet, *The Politics of the Business*. Think the guy ain't cheeky enough to let hip-hop know what's up? Think again. *Ron Nachmann*

GREYBOY MAKE NOISE *Ubiquity/US/12*

First of all, I know people who'd love records like this. Singing verses, horns, keys, rhyming with a jazzy vibe. As for myself, I get anxiety. Would people that I know buy it? Maybe. Would I buy it? Probably not. It would make me go purchase the *Politics of the Business* album. *PP*

SOUL PURPOSE TAKE OVER *Coup d'Etat/US/12*

As far as bragging underground rap records go, this is neither good nor bad. Pumpkin Head definitely shines with a nice rhyme flow. The beat is basic. If you're a Soul Purpose fan add this to your collection; if you are undecided at the record store buy *Politics of the Business* to avoid taking any unnecessary risks. *PP*

SOULS OF MISCHIEF SPARK *Chocolate Industries/US/12*

I'm a Souls of Mischief fan, so I automatically raise the bar on quality. "Spark," to me, is a good song—nice head-bob beat and the rhymes are cool, but sound compromising. These guys are better than what they portray on this record. I would suggest they listen to the *Politics of the Business* album and re-record their material. *PP*

ODDJOB'S SHOPKEEPERS WIFE EP *Third Earth Music/US/12*

Dark, quality production, good rhyme-flows. If you get high or if you are the serious mad-at-the-world type, you'll love this. If you're into good times and multiple orgasms, you'll buy *Politics of the Business*. Either/or, you'll be good. *PP*

CIRCLE RESEARCH SPEAK & READ
Cartridge Family Records/CAN/12

Toronto DJ/producers Nix, Astro and Chris B check in with three chunky bits. "Speak and Read" runs a tight rhythm under Smooth B-ish rhymes by local Abdominal dueling a Speak 'n' Spell toy. Meanwhile, Psy swallows two million words to little effect on "Psy'd Tracked," but comes through nicer on the T-town posse cut "Fade," featuring eight MCs, including Yushin killin' it in Japanese. Rhyme styles: B+. Beats: A+. *Ron Nachmann*

COMMON FEAT. ERYKAH BADU, Q-TIP AND PHARRELL WILLIAMS
COME CLOSE RMX
MCA/US/12

A fly love song just got flyer. Common responds to charges that Badu is hip-hop's Yoko Ono and owns up to his tight shirts and vegetarianism. Pharrell, offering girls rides on the handlebars, steals the show (again): "I'm goin' back to my skater roots/but still got friends in them gator boots." For added fun, imagine that Q-Tip's verse goes out to Nicole Kidman. *Ross Hogg*

DEFARI SPELL MY NAME
High Times/US/12

LA's freshest schoolteacher drops science on "Spell My Name." The driving beat (by Evidence of Dilated Peoples) lends itself to the spelling-bee chorus and D-E-F-A-R-I doesn't disappoint. For disappointment, check the flip's "Slumpy," a funky-ass Fred Wrek track with a weak-ass hook: "Bitch, I don't give a fuck, bitch." You won't either. *Ross Hogg*

DOUJAH RAZE SPINMATA
Brick/US/12

"Spinmata" is a tale of the woe and intrigue suffered by club DJs. Raze vents about requests from taxin' Anglo-Saxons ("Can you play some hip-hop...like Britney Spears?") over a slow, reggae-tinged horn track by The Beatminerz. The flip's "The Breakoff" holds it down with guests Optical and Thad Reid, and blazing cuts from DJ Dial Tone. *Ross Hogg*

EMBEDDED UNSEALED ARCHIVES
Embedded Music/US/12

In which NYC grimesters Ese and Hipsta roll us three that didn't make the cut of their

Bedford Files comp. The grime and urban blues are here throughout, but put aside Hangar 18's nondescript rhyme at the ladies and the Vast Aire/LoDeck/Tes/Breez Evahflowin' posse cut for RJD2's mix of Vast's "Tippin Dominos." We're talkin' tinny acid-rock guitars repeatedly whooshed into the vortex. Whoa. *Ron Nachmann*

FIRECLAP BEGIN WITHOUT END
Emmoworks/US/7

Southern Cali represents on the indie side with panache yet again. Rhymers LMNO, Zaire Black and June 22 coolly ride a bad-ass jazz-funk riddim by DJ Westafa. Spacious lines, no garble, no emo indulgence, just Emmoworks smoothness. "The beginning of what is to be endless," whines the scratched phrase. We hope so. *Ron Nachmann*

TALIB KWELI GET BY
Rawkus/US/12

Think conscious rap is dead? Let Kweli take you to church on this one. Over producer Kanye West's beautiful-yet-bumpin' piano loop and a sample of Nina Simone's "Sinnerman,"

Kweli spits human, heartfelt verses about modern-day pitfalls and struggles. He pulls it off not by preaching, but by praying with you. Can I get an "amen"? *Ross Hogg*

SEEL FRESH NICKELPIMP
Rapstar/US/12

On "Nickel Pimp," Chicago's Seel Fresh explains "the art of gettin' over." Even though Dug Infinite provides the slow, sparse, slamming beat, the b-side's "Generation Lost" wins. The offbeat piano track by Mind has serious nod factor, Noble's scratches are tight, and Seel's frustrated flow fits perfectly. Fo' shickel, my nickel. *Ross Hogg*

SPAZTIK EMCEE RUN OF THE MILL RMX
Cosmic Flux Music/US/12

Over a beat that could be "Proceed, Part IV," this Bay Area b-boy drops smoo lyrics like it's '88 and he came to set it straight. With Regina Monique's soft singing on the hook, "Run" merges hip-hop and r&b without shorting either. The flip's "We Three Kings" is a Philly affair, with a bangin' beat by Grand Agent (Mountain Brother) Chops, who also rhymes. *Ross Hogg*



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LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS:
OTTO VON SCHIRACH
 Florida's Otto Von Schirach has become a notorious fixture in the experimental electronix scene, brandishing a flipped-out vision of animalistic, genetically tweaked booty-bass-cum-ghetto-tech sludge. With his *Chopped Zombie Fungus* trilogy of EPs now collected as his third album, Mr. Von Schirach seems poised to slather more mustard on his behind and romantically sniff a lot of toes. Meanwhile, he's got stuff to say about some twisted sounds, so de-crust yr eyelids and have a look. *Ron Nachmann*

THE BUG VS. THE ROOTSMAN FEAT. DADDY FREDDY / DJ /RUPTURE
Tigerbeat6/US/12

The Bug vs. The Rootsman feat. Daddy Freddy is exploring a new form of (glitch?) dance-hall, as DJ /rupture hilariously finger fucks jungle into a spastic unpredictable brain flush of "Paloma Grease," then from 4/4 bipolar drill-core crunch into a drunk whirlwind pause of retarded snare movements. Definite ear candy for the alligators. *OVS*

DINO FELIPE EGONO EP *Schematic/US/12*

Dino will make all you "straight boys" wet! You might as well feather him down with a palm leaf. On this 12", Dino is making his version of rave music. Crusty noise over classic techno after a bass ball beat loop from the year 1952, crashes a melodic piano then collides into a wall of angel dust. After Xanax, conversation and sex comes Dino. *OVS*

MANITOBA JACKNUGGETED *Leaf/UK/12*

Relax, take a breath, LISTEN. Enjoy the slow romantic indie rock "Seaweed," the kind of stuff you can play for your mom, without being bored yourself. Tons of jingles over acoustic drums ("Thistles and Felt"). Vocal delights! You will have dreams about lemonade. *OVS*

APEANAUT GO AWAY

Redbud/US/12
 Brooklyn dubmaster and Antibalas keyboardist Tikhah offers his label's first 12", and it's pure talent. Live bass from Ninjaboy, sultry vocals from Diana Blain, and big, thumping beat structures that balance foggy, haunted dub bass and cracking hip-hop snares like a holy mix of UK artists G-Corp and Spacer. Galliant. *Tomas*

DAEDELUS THE HOUSEHOLD EP

Eastern Developments/US/CD
 Santa Monica's favorite electro antiquarian gets domestic, sweeping up Louis Bonfa, Robert Moog, Coldcut, The Fat Boys and Bollywood soundtracks into a digi-dustpan mosaic. Prefuse 73 stops by to lend some beats and a helping hand with the chores. Their mothers must be so proud. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

FENIN DRIVEN

MONKEYTRIBE DELAWARE
ROOTSMAN SHOWCASE
Meteosound/GER/12
 Berliner Daniel Meteo's brilliant next-dub label continues to lead the way with three killers. Producer Lars Fenin brings four diverse and intense minimalist stepper gems, while Glasgow dub-hoppers Monkeytribe offer up opaque UK-style hip-hop angst with rhymes by the high-pitched Soom T. Finally, veteran Brit dubmeister Rootsman enriches his exquisitely yearning bluesy minor-key jams with vocals from the legendary Horace Andy and Bobby Blue. Three slices of Europe's dubwise best. *Ron Nachmann*

GAVOUNA WARM INDUSTRY EP

Melodic/UK/12
 Greek Athanasios Argianas studied visual art until he fell in with a student of Xenakis and Berio. On *Warm Industry*, he's made dusty piano and analog synth vignettes that sound like Boards of Canada remixing Erik Satie and Morton Subotnick at GRM. Somehow anciently modern, and perhaps even peerless. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

GRAY MARKET GOODS WE LIVE IN THE FUTURE

THE SEA & CAKE GLASS
Thrill Jockey/US/CD
 As Gray Market Goods, Chicago alt-legend Bundy K Brown (formerly of Tortoise and Directions in Music) satisfies his out-jazz preoccupations, letting flow on what sounds like Herbie Hancock remixed by Cinematic Orchestra, but is really just his insane collage process of live and sampled sounds. Aside from the spacious delight of "Traditional Wax Coin," the "Glass" EP, recorded just after their incandescent *One Bedroom*, captures The Sea & Cake in rather lackluster form. Get it for the remixes courtesy Broadcast, Stereolab and Carl Craig. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

JAGA JAZZIST ANIMAL CHIN EP

GSL/US/CD
 Culling three songs from the Norwegian nine-piece post-jazz collective's excellent *Smalltown Supersound* debut, with two exclusive tracks and two remixes (courtesy drummer Martin Hornveth and field-recording fetishist Kim Hiorthoy), this EP goes down chilly like tropical cocktails in a ski chalet with John Barry, Deodato, Stevie Wonder and Tortoise. A crisp Alpine mindfuck. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

MASSIVE ATTACK SPECIAL CASES

Giant Step/US/12
 Don't know whose idea it was to release such a decidedly tech-house 12" for the first single off the middling *100° Window*, but I'm not complaining. L'uomo makes like Herbert on pop, while Akufen gives you the reason to purchase: a searing, 10-minute broken-beat odyssey. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

SYLFORD WALKER

CHANT DOWN BABYLON
DEUTERONOMY
Pantomime-SEM Ltd./UK/10
 With King Tubby on the mix of these two '70s reggae gems, plus a DJ version by Welton Irie ("Give Jah The Glory") and Glen Brown blowing his melodica, these 10" reissues of one of Jamaica's most delicate but searing roots vocalists are as essential as it comes. Matched with their dubs, Walker radiates timelessly. *Tomas*



Amazing how you observe anything long enough and you get to learn its natural ebb and flow, like the rhythm of migrating grey whales or the death-knell of a Bush presidency. For 32 years now, I've skulked around the backroads and railroads of the Bay Area and the West like some Ed Abbey-in-training, digging everything from the Oregon Dunes under a full moon to the old train station and petroglyphs of muddy Barstow, tagging roadside bathrooms all along the way and sampling huevos rancheros from Pueblo to Seattle and beer in dusty campsites everywhere in between. The fog burns off, the gulls return, the rains come, then Chinese New Year and my annual re-reading of Frank Chin's novel *Donald Duk*, Giants opening day, another summer of streetfairs, and life goes on. I track the gradual movement of the sun from room to room in the apartment I grew up in, watch the pampass grass wavering in the wind above Mavericks, and the collection of beach rocks on my bookshelf grows slowly larger. Parties, money and hangovers come and go, but hopefully friends remain for Sunday rooftops in North Beach and weekends in the Tahoe snow. It has been written about Robinson Jeffers's character Clare Walker "... her drama has titanic dimensions; she re-enacts the ancient autumnal rites of cycle-end in which the old king must yield his life and world to the new." Let your old kings die. This Bush, too, shall pass—and all his ugliness with him. Peace, folks.

- 1) SKHOOL YARD "FASHION SHOW"** (*Threshold/US/12*) Planet Asia and a slew of Central Valley Cali cats rip shit over a rough Kutmasta Kurt beat that sounds a little like Premier chopping up Zorba the Greek. Souvlaki, anyone? This one's juicy for sure.
 - 2) CENTRAL STANDARDS PRESENTS "SOUTHERN SOUL CONSTRUCTION"** (*Alternate Take/US/12EP*) Central Standards is a collective of DJs and beatheads from North Texas, and this is quality, jazzy instrumental hip-hop worthy of a spot in the bag. Equipt's track just keeps getting better. Look for more...
 - 3) J-BOOGIE'S DUBTRONIC SCIENCE "TRY ME"** (*Om/US/12*) My man J-Boogie comes correct with the no-joke Frisco funk. Thick as the summer fog but hot enough to melt any late-night basement jam—this one's in the wino crate for sure. Featuring Capitol A and the amazing Goapele on vocals, plus live congas and flute and remixes from King Kooba and People Under the Stairs—this one's a burner just waiting to happen. Cocktails, anyone, while we wait for the full-length?
 - 4) AFRODISIAC SOUND SYSTEM "AFRO-HEAT"** (*white label/US/12*) Good god, go track this shit down! Like NOW. Grandmaster Flash meets '80s electro meets Afrobeat meets trash-can loft-jazz à la Liquid Liquid. No doubt, this is hot as hell. Also look for stuff on the Afrodisiac label out of LA, such as Fischer P's remix of "Natural Points."
 - 5) NOSTALGIA 77 "THE GOAT"** (*Tru Thoughts/UK/7*) As long as we're throwing it all in a blender, what if Cut Chemist and Luke Vibert got loaded and sampled a bunch of Quinn Martin records one night and made a couple tracks? Well, here you go.
 - 6) BUSDRIVER & RADIOINACTIVE (AS THE WEATHER) "WINTHORP & WINTHORP"** (*Mush/US/7*) Let's roll with that idea. How about Henry Mancini meets Prince Paul and William S. Burroughs behind the keys of Herb Caen's Royale typewriter, martinis in hand. Yep. Pop-jazz beat-hop. Whatever. It's kooky and good. Don't be a herb, go buy it.
 - 7) JUGOE "NIGHTFUMBLINGS" (REMIXES)** (*Bastard Jazz/US/12*) Nice new abstract/downtempo label out of Brooklyn, doing their thing and laying it down lovely. Good stuff from Ohio's Jugoe, with Q-Burns and Protassov coming through on the remixes. Check the freaky electroblues on the Protassav version of "Kingpin" on the flip.
 - 8) JOEL "WON'T TAKE NO (GIORGIO'S LIGHTS OUT DUB)"** (*Electric Monkey/US/12*) Speaking of freaky, this is a slow-burning little electro-heater that just sort of bubbles up out of nowhere, peeks its head around the dancefloor, and then smacks you in the knees with a Louisville slinger. Lights out, indeed—this is mescaline music at its finest.
 - 9) NATALIE GARDINER "GOING DOWN SLOW"** (*Ramjac/SWE/12*) So me and DJ Wisdom have a new little jazz and soul night on Mondays called Juicy. After the kinds of weekends we're known for, "Going Down Slow" could easily be our Monday soundtrack—all Al Green- and Sade-inspired sexy slow beats. Very nice. "Move Me" on the flip is another gem: broken, chopped-up downtempo for the early dancefloor. Beautiful voice and vibe.
 - 10) SOUL PURPOSE "TAKE COVER (FEAT. PUMPKINHEAD)"** (*Coup d'Etat/US/12*) Rough Jersey/Berkeley/Iranian collabo that could probably only go down in the Bronx. Infesticons meets Def Jux-style aggro hip-hop. More for the bar than the club, and folks would DIG this on college radio.
 - 11) JAMES EK-SEL THE SWEET SCIENCE OF SIN (B.A.A.C./US/CD)** Bugged-out beats and lyrics from AS Crew storyteller and DJ James Ek-Sel. A strange and visionary blend of '80s welcome-funk, jazz breaks, spoken word and new-wave guitars, my name is definitely a welcome addition to the Bay Area's mutant music scene.
 - 12) DJ DRUNKEN MONKEY "GRATIFICATION (HAWKE BLUE RESSURRECTION MIX)"** (*Sunburn/US/12*) So I was playing a test pressing of this, thinking how much it reminded me of fast drives through West Marin with Gavin Hardkiss at the wheel. A little old-time West Coast acid funk to hit the beach, and Niven from Sunburn calls to confirm my gut beliefs. Great acid-disco with a Wu-Tang bassline and lullaby keys. While you're at it, track down Gavin's latest mix CD *The Afro Punk Explosions* for more good yums.
- LUCKY 13) MILK** (*nightclub/US*) From the fine folks behind the hip True and Red5 boutiques comes the beautifully redone Milk, in the old Galaxy space across from Amoeba on Haight Street, San Francisco. Bright and cream-colored, with tall windows opening onto the street, a front room lounge and backroom dancefloor, Milk is already the home to parties from Ubiquity and Wax with all sorts of fun up their sleeves for the summer.

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UK BREAKS PIONEER TIPPER ALREADY HAS A REPUTATION FOR HIS EARTHQUAKE-INDUCING BASS SOUNDS. ON HIS LATEST ALBUM, *SURROUNDED*, HE TAKES THINGS 5.1 NOTCHES HIGHER. HERE'S HOW HE DOES IT.

Dave Tipper needs no introduction, even if he usually only goes by his last name. He's the nu-skoool breaks legend that co-founded the Fuel record label at the tender age of 16, before being signed by Sony bigwigs for his landmark debut, *The Critical Path*.

But he's also the guy who once owned the loudest car in the world, one with speakers that pumped so thunderously that it caused him inner-ear damage. A sonic warrior to the last, he merely shrugged off the equilibrium problems and further jacked the sound up by increasing the size of the setting. After all, why blow your ears out in a car when you can do it in your living room?

Such is the insightful logic behind his latest hypnotic effort, *Surrounded*, a downtempo excursion in 5.1 surround sound that's as addictive as it is disorienting. While other musicians flirt with the increasingly stagnant two-channel experience, Tipper's new joint looks to a day when the superior sound of surround is the sonic norm. And that day is closer than you might think.

XLR8R: What kind of gear and software did you use to make the new album?

Tipper: The writing process was done on my laptop, using Logic as a sequencer and a bunch of plug-ins. The mixing process was done in a surround sound studio in LA. For this process, all of the Logic files were transferred to Pro Tools and mixed on a digital surround desk. It was a bit of a nightmare at first. It should actually be a very straightforward procedure, which it is now. But it was a mess trying to transfer everything over, until we got a system down.

XLR8R: Why surround sound?

Tipper: It's just the next level from listening to stereo. Once you hear stuff in a relatively good surround sound environment, you can hear that it pretty much supersedes stereo. With stereo, everything is concentrated in front of you. It's a monotone experience. Whereas surround sound is like Technicolor. I've wanted to make a surround sound album for years—the music I was doing was well suited to it. But I never had an opportunity until now, so I had to grab it with both hands when I was presented with it.

XLR8R: Can you explain the process, for those who are just entering the game, as well as some of the complications?

Tipper: 5.1 surround sound involves sitting in the middle of five speakers. You're in the middle, and your left, right and rear speakers are all exactly spaced from you, and they're all calibrated to the same db output. They have to be totally equal in every possible way. As for complications—obviously, you have three more channels of mixing to worry about, whereas before you just had to decide what you wanted to go on the left and the right. Now you have to consider what's going to sit behind you, what's going to move around, what's going to be stationary. There are a lot more elements to consider when you're mixing.

XLR8R: What's your favorite music software and hardware?

Tipper: My favorite software is Logic, with a whole multitude of associated plug-ins. For hardware, I still like the Access Virus and the Eventide Harmonizer.

XLR8R: Can you describe both your mobile and home studio set-ups?

Tipper: The mobile set-up I'm using right now is relatively simple: a Macintosh G4 laptop, a soundcard, an Oxygen 8 MIDI software controller, and headphones. I'm using Logic as my sequencer, and that's loaded with plug-ins, virtual synthesizers, and all that. Most of my drums are live, but they're put into a giant library bank, which I just load into my computer. But when I need live guitar or bass, I've got a soundcard with a pre-amp that allows me to play right into the computer.

Then I have a little USB keyboard for playing chords and stuff, and that's it. My home setup consists of a Macintosh G4, a Mackie 32/8 mixing console, an Akai S3000 XL sampler, an Access Virus, a Korg Z1 synthesizer, and a DBX 1066 dual compressor.

XLR8R: Do you think that developments in technology may make the pro studios obsolete?

Tipper: Oh, definitely. Pro studios will undoubtedly become obsolete because of the affordability of equipment and how savvy people have become with that equipment. It won't necessarily be mobile studios that take over the pro studios, but the home studios will definitely take over. Anyone will be able to get anything done as long as people have a room with four walls, five speakers and the software and hardware that they need.

XLR8R: Is it 5.1. from now on?

Tipper: Pretty much, yeah. I mean, obviously for sheer convenience, I'm going to have to release some stereo stuff. But for my own personal taste, I'm done with stereo for good. It's never the same after you've spoiled yourself with surround sound.

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LIVE AT FIVE

The basic rule of life in the 21st century—people want it *all*, and they want it *now*. Whatever it is—news coverage, movie tickets, cell-phone improvements or cosmetic body enhancements, the consumer public has a short patience threshold, which means if you haven't made your thingamajig to be as good or better than dude-over-there's thingamajig, step aside, 'cause people aren't gonna wait for you to catch up. The same is true, or more so, in the world of home studio production software. Programs like Cubase, Reason and Logic gained popularity quickly—some literally overnight—by responding to that consumer mob mentality.

Producers wanted vintage software-base synths that sounded and acted exactly like the pricey real thing and, *voilà*, a whole barrage of Korg, Roland and Moog-modeled devices became available. Then producers began demanding (and in some cases building their own) multi-feature recording and sequencing software combining synths, drums machines, samplers and effects. Now, there's cock-fightingly fierce competition in the software world to cram as many cool tools into one all-encompassing program. Native Instruments Reaktor, Propellerheads Reason and Motu's Digital Performer are some of the leaders of the pack, now **Cakewalk's Project 5** software studio is here. Will PC users abandon Reason and Cakewalk's Sonar XL?

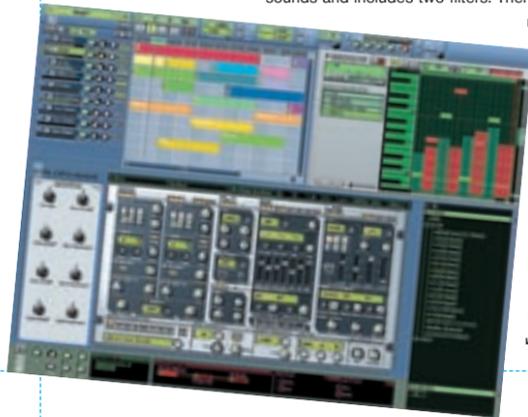
Project 5 is dope. It combines the features of both music production software with a set-up geared towards live performance, not unlike a two-headed dragon combining the best of Sonar XL and Ableton's Live technology. Ready to play? Instruments include the very dreamy PSYN virtual analog synth that makes very cool mono sounds and includes two filters. Then there's the tight DS-854 digital sampler, with eight audio outputs so you can further manipulate your sound masterpieces with your own VST effects.

The nPulse modular drum synth makes all the badass vintage Roland TB drums sounds (*acieeeed!*), while the Velocity drum sampler is compatible with wav, aif and LM4 drum sound libraries, with precise panning, reverse and tuning built in. Other features include a whole array of very professional effects (time/frequency manipulation, vocoder-style effects, tracers, stereo delay, parametric EQ etc.).

But what sets Cakewalk's line apart—Project 5 included—is their super-user friendly "pattern" displays and storage. Basically, like Live, all you really have to think about is moving colored blocks of sound around. That's comforting, right? Everything in the program can be controlled in real-time and on the fly—loops, effects, synths, drums—all that. Project 5 is exceptionally simple, and indeed all-in-one, and that's what the mob wants. *Tomas Palermo*

MSRP: \$429

www.cakewalk.com



>> BASICALLY, LIKE LIVE, ALL YOU REALLY HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IS MOVING COLORED BLOCKS AROUND. THAT'S COMFORTING, RIGHT?

DIGITAL DOMINANCE

With the whole world going *soft*—software-based recording that is—it's still necessary to examine the hardbody studio workhorses that are keeping up with the zeros-and-ones crew. Now considered a leader in sophisticated studio hardware, Yamaha has added a new member—the tantalizingly named **01V96**—to their already strong line of digital mixing consoles. Housed in the same compact footprint as Yamaha's original 01V, the guts of the new mixer received more than just a facelift.

The new V96, (which, for our purposes we can refer to here as **Vic Ninety Six**—that's a bit sexier) is a sleekly organized console that sports 40 simultaneous mixing channels, all at full 24-bit/96 kHz resolution, with 32-bit internal processing. An astounding 32 mono inputs are provided, each equipped with those godsend of modern mixing—gates and compression, plus a fully parametric four-band EQ. Four stereo inputs are also included, each with parametric EQ. So basically, you can invite the whole band over to your bedroom, plug 'em in and get straight-up maximum quality recorded sound. *Sick!*

Vic 96's 17 buttery motorized faders allow you to get all 10 fingers dancing across the mixing desk like your masseuse after one too many espressos. All can be switched on the fly to control any input or output, and 99 scene memories are available to store complete snapshots of all console settings. I'll bet they'll be a lot of scenes you *won't* want it to remember, like when your bassist spills the bong on your Persian carpet...but I digress.

Getting back to the nerdy stuff, the Vic Ninety Six has four internal effects processors, which may be used simultaneously, while effects and channel inserts can be assigned to any channel or output via a digital patching system. If that weren't enough, separate storage libraries exist for EQ, dynamics and effects, plus virtual patch-bay settings.

The Vic-ster is rack-mountable, and boasts eight busses and eight auxs (that stands for "auxiliary"—not something nasty!), making it ideal for live as well as studio applications. It integrates with several computer-based DAWs, with extensive support provided for ProTools and Nuendo. The included Yamaha Studio Manager software is both Macintosh- and Windows-compatible—praise the (OS) lord.

Eight channels of ADAT I/O and Word-Clock I/O are standard. The mega-big-visible-from-the-planet-Mars 320 X 240 LCD screen completes the, em, picture, providing a clear display—which is important after you've finished the first six-pack of Miller. In conclusion—live, hardware-based mixing is fun! King Tubby did it, and so can you—albeit sans the hand-built 4-track tape machine and pound of fresh ganja. *Doug Eisengrein*

MSRP: \$2,499

www.yamaha.com



>> KING TUBBY DID IT, AND SO CAN YOU—ALBEIT SANS THE HAND-BUILT 4-TRACK MACHINE AND POUND OF FRESH GANJA.



QUICKIE

SERATO SCRATCH PLUG-IN

With Stanton's Final Scratch becoming all the rage, Serato brings their own nifty little "use records to scratch MP3s" setup. Currently only compatible with Pro Tools—both Mac and PC versions—Scratch lets you, well, scratch any sound or song on your computer using special records (included) on your turntables. This actually bridges the digital/analog divide, giving you a ton of flexibility without having to sacrifice the familiarity of a record spinning under your hand. *Jesse Terry*

Pros: Simple, convenient, and it brings digital music into the analog realm instead of vice-versa.

Cons: Only works with Pro Tools.

MSRP: \$299

www.serato.com



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MEET YOUR MATCH

When we all get along, the world is a much nicer place, agreed? So, as users of Reason, Cubase, Logic, Live and Digital Performer already know, **Propellerheads ReWire** is a great utility that allows simultaneous streaming of MIDI, audio and transport controls between different programs. Digidesign, giants of the digital recording industry, have finally gotten hip to the game, working with Propellerheads to incorporate this feature into Pro Tools. Reason's instruments can now be routed through Pro Tool's substantially superior effects, and all levels and EQs can be controlled on Pro Tools' mixer. Musicians can also run Reason files with live instrumentation recorded (at top quality) on Pro Tools. Winners in the deal include Ableton, whose Live program will now also work in Pro Tools. Losers include ReFuse, who were manufacturing a third party application doing basically the same thing, though ReWire will be free. Cool stuff—it's hard to believe it took so long. *Jesse Terry*
www.propellerheads.se

>> DIGIDESIGN, GIANTS OF THE DIGITAL RECORDING INDUSTRY, HAVE FINALLY GOTTEN HIP TO THE GAME...

THE DO-ALL PROGRAM

Mac users have something to be jealous about. The latest version of **Syntrillium Cool Edit Pro** is an all-in-one program designed to let you record, edit, master and mix down on your PC, with professional 32-bit processing and support for 24-bit/192-kHz recording. This application is incredibly easy to install and set up. Its interface is user-friendly and has a fresh look. 2.0 has quite a few upgrades over previous editions, with plug-ins working faster, disk-at-once CD-burning, and much more.

The loop-based composition feature combined with an automatic tempo finder draws similarities to ACID or Fruity Loops. The new version also allows you to record and play back up to 128 tracks, even on relatively slow PCs. A pre-mixing technique that works in the background allows for an unbelievable number of tracks (though there is probably a thirty-sided die, wizard costumes and programming magic involved.)

Like many high-end programs, CEP 2.0 is non-destructive; it's easy to repair mistakes, and the multiple undo feature is good for people who change their minds frequently. For those of you in the process of transforming your vinyl collection to digital audio, features like pop/click noise and hum eliminators are very useful.

One drawback is a relative lack of MIDI features; this is a program designed around audio features. CEP won't match up with high-end Pro Tools and Nuendo systems, but it easily gives programs like Cubase and Cakewalk (which cost about twice as much) a run for their money, with equal or better performance. Most importantly, this is a program that lets you concentrate on music more than the machine, at a very reasonable price. *Jesse Terry*
www.syntrillium.com



>> THESE THINGS ARE LIKE A SMUGGLER'S DREAM... BUT I DIGRESS.



ASK ROBOTSPEAK!

XLR8R's New Gear Advice Column

It's our new column, where you, the reader, query the gear and technology experts at computer musician retail spot Robotspeak. Got a question about your bedroom and studio production and DJ gear? Fire away!

Dear Robotspeak: What sequencing programs work best for exporting tracks to Ableton Live?
-David Stewart, Trenton, NJ

David, at this point none of the sequencing programs support direct export of an entire song into Ableton Live. But because Live is based on audio loops, it's a pretty simple process to choose and render chunks of audio from your song and import them into a Live session. If you have a drum pattern, for instance, that repeats for 16 measures in your sequence, select a single measure of it and export that. Do the same thing for all your other tracks, and use these loops as the building blocks to create a remix from the ground up. This process usually involves soloing an audio track, selecting the length you want to render, and choosing "bounce to disk" or "mix-down." And remember—Live changes tempo and key on the fly—why limit yourself to material from a single song?

Dear Robotspeak: Do you have any recommendations for a decent keyboard controller? Can you explain basically how I can use one with something like Logic?
-Cliff, Pacifica, CA

Cliff, the best MIDI keyboard controller for you depends on your need for portability. Midiman's two-octave Oxygen 8 is about as portable as you can get; you can even get a nifty backpack specifically designed to hold it and your laptop so you can bus it to the gig. The Oxygen 8 is the shiznit for playing synth bass lines or step-recording drums into your sequencer, but if you want to play live with both hands, you should look for something a little larger. Check out the new PCR-50 four-octave keyboard from Edirol.

Setting up your keyboard's knobs and faders to work with most wares is a snap. You install drivers, plug into a USB port, select some preferences and you're on your way. Reason, for example, "listens" for whatever MIDI information you throw at it. When you click on a knob on screen then twiddle a knob on your keyboard, Reason "hears" the incoming MIDI data and creates a connection between the two.

Logic, however, is a bit tricky. At the risk of getting into geekish detail, Logic uses a graphical collection of "objects" with different functions called the Environment. These objects connect in various ways to route and transform MIDI data. The Environment is what gives Logic its über-flexibility, but sometimes at the expense of ease of use. To control a soft synth's parameter, you'll need to create a "transformer object" to receive the MIDI controller data from your keyboard's fader and convert it to information the synth will respond to. The good news is, if you aren't a geek, once you've set it up, you can forget about it.

Have a burning DJ gear or computer techy question? Send your query to: tomas@xlr8r.com, put "ASK ROBOT-SPEAK" in the subject line, and your answer may appear in the next issue! Check Robotspeak's dope website at: www.robotspeak.com

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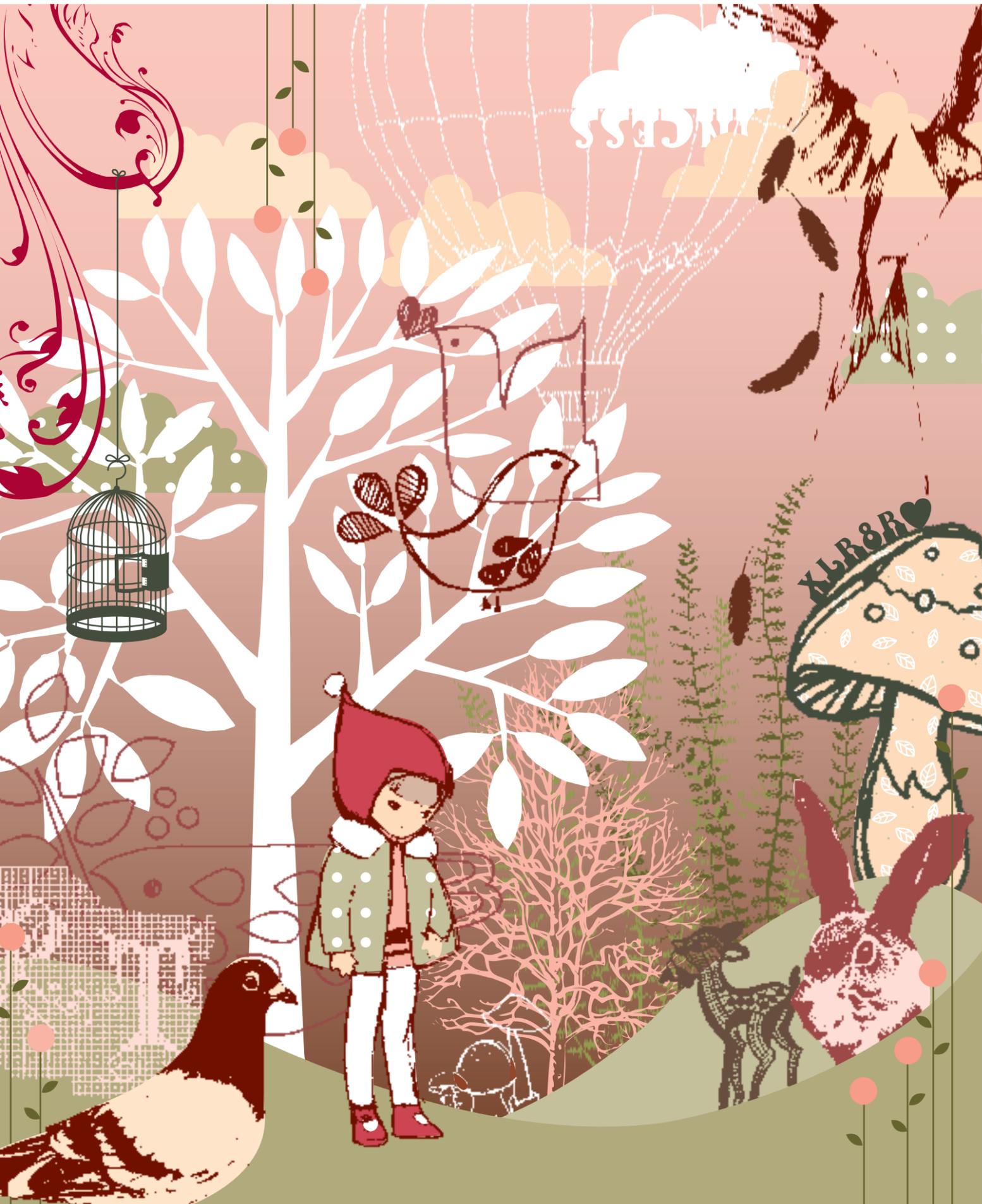


Mac OSX version available Spring 2003

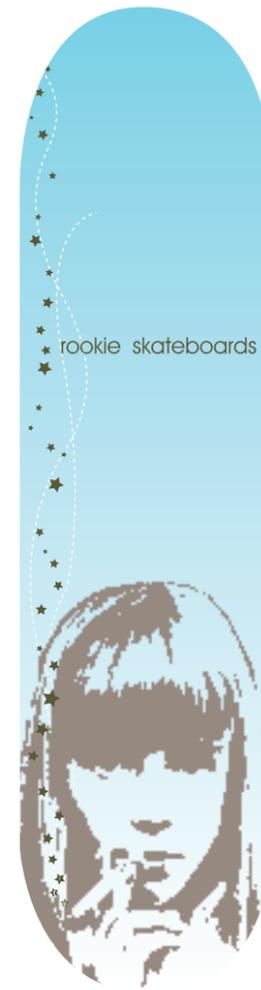
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Final Scratch® includes 3 encoded vinyl records, the Scratch Amp and software. Works on both laptop and desktop computers, Windows OS, Linux OS and Mac OSX compatible. (Turntables, mixer, computer and DJ Kevin not included.)





Rookie



VIS-ED BECI ORPIN

A FLOWER ON OTHERWISE ARID ROCK, AUSTRALIAN DESIGNER BECI ORPIN SPEAKS LOUDLY AND CARRIES A SOFT PALETTE.

TEXT DAVID J WEISSBERG IMAGES BECI ORPIN

Australia's bounty comes in waves, though regrettably, the last care-package stamped "From Down Under, With Love" that landed on our shores was a Pandora's box that unleashed INXS, Paul Hogan, *Mad Max III* and seemingly endless crates of suspect haircare products and bottled waters, all with kangaroos for logos.

Today's wealth, however, has come a long way since *Crocodile Dundee Takes Los Angeles*. Folks like The Avalanches, PAM (Perks and Mini), Mooks and Rinzen are all showing that Australia's future looks a lot more promising. Equally pivotal to this pack is Melbourne's Beci Orpin (also known sometimes as Princess Tina), whose work for XLARGE, Stussy, Built by Wendy and *Relax Magazine* has poised her well beyond her own continent. Orpin's world is a secret garden of adolescent girls, trees, deer, balloons and otherwise discard-

ed fantasy elements, a territory usually reserved for children's books and people who collect Hummel figurines.

It's often said that what separates porn from fine art is the lighting. So too the fine line that separates the hip from the naïf is Orpin's rather sophisticated color palette and context: her work is more likely to be decorating a Rookie skateboard than a Midwestern wife's shelf of porcelain knick knacks and gee gaws. It could also be a sign of the times—soft seems to be the new hard.

The idea of "cute" can be traced back a half-dozen years or so to the inspired rebellion of Mike Mills, whose use of monkeys and kittens set him apart in a street art world congested with blunts, guns and deconstructed type. That attitude is still in line today: now that tribal and gangster tattoos are both removable and easily purchased at Wal Mart, most skateboarders are opting for

real ones of hummingbirds and sparrows. Don't be misled however—Orpin's work isn't sarcastic. She truly embodies the world she herself sets up, and there's nothing more ironic these days than just being sincere.

XLR8R: Where does the name Princess Tina come from?

Beci Orpin: I collect a lot of stuff. One of the things I have a lot of are old annual [women's magazines]. I kept finding these annuals from the '60s and '70s called *Princess Tina*, and they were always the coolest. At first I was going to run a club night—that used to be one of my jobs—called Princess Tina's Pony Club, but decided no straight boys would come. So I used it as my label name instead.



XLR8R: Is there a philosophy?

BO: I don't think I have one. I try not to think about what I'm doing when I work. [Instead, I] just do what comes naturally. I'll always try and stay true to myself, and trust my own instincts. It's worked pretty good so far.

XLR8R: Was designing streetwear something you planned?

BO: I guess. When I was younger, the whole XGirl/XLarge thing obsessed me—I used to go [600 Kilometers] to Sydney just to buy XGirl tees! There wasn't much around then, and it was cool and exclusive. It was the only part of fashion I was interested in, mostly because it wasn't really fashion at all. I didn't want to be a graphic designer, and didn't want to end up designing florals for bed linen, which is what a lot of the textile graduates go on to do. Streetwear was a good way of doing graphic-based stuff within the fashion industry.

XLR8R: What do t-shirts mean to you?

BO: I always wanted to design graphics for t-shirts, and now that's a lot of what I [do], so I guess they're pretty important to my work. The best thing about t-shirts is they are easy to wear and accessible to many different types of people. It's a nice way for a lot of people to see your work.

XLR8R: Has street art become too much of a commodity? If so, is that good or bad?

BO: Definitely, it sucks. There's been a lot of amazing work produced over the years to form that genre, but it's become quite popular and mainstream to a point. [I think it's] bad when big advertising companies use

things like stenciling or illegal postering, or rip-off a familiar artist to sell a product so that they [can appear to be] "on the level with the youth of today." It makes everything seem like such a cliché.

XLR8R: Have you done big advertising company work? Where do you draw the line?

BO: No, not really. I haven't really had to draw the line. I've [designed] a phone company promotion, but nothing that involved their logo, just my images. I've been asked by some of the bigger companies I work for to rip-off certain artist's work, which I never did. Big companies are not necessarily all evil. They can support street art in good way—by sponsoring shows etc.—but it's when they try to manipulate [art] to sell product that it gets bad.

XLR8R: In your opinion what is the fine line between a "big advertising company" and a company like XLarge or Stussy?

BO: XLarge and Stussy were started by people who were [actually] skaters and surfers or making music, who [then] decided to make clothes. Their roots and interests are genuine, even if they've turned into bigger companies. The people they get to do design for them still generally have those interests. On the other hand, I think big advertising companies see street art as the cool thing of the moment and try and manipulate it to sell product—but they were never involved or interested in it.

XLR8R: What's the current state of Australian design?

BO: It's pretty good. Melbourne is a really easy place to

start a label and so there are a lot of local labels and shops to support them, which I think is super-good. There is definitely a lot of support for local stuff, but it's only happened in the last say, four years. It's good to see it develop. There's still a lot of biting and ripping-off, though, which makes me cringe.

XLR8R: Do you think there's an Australian "look"?

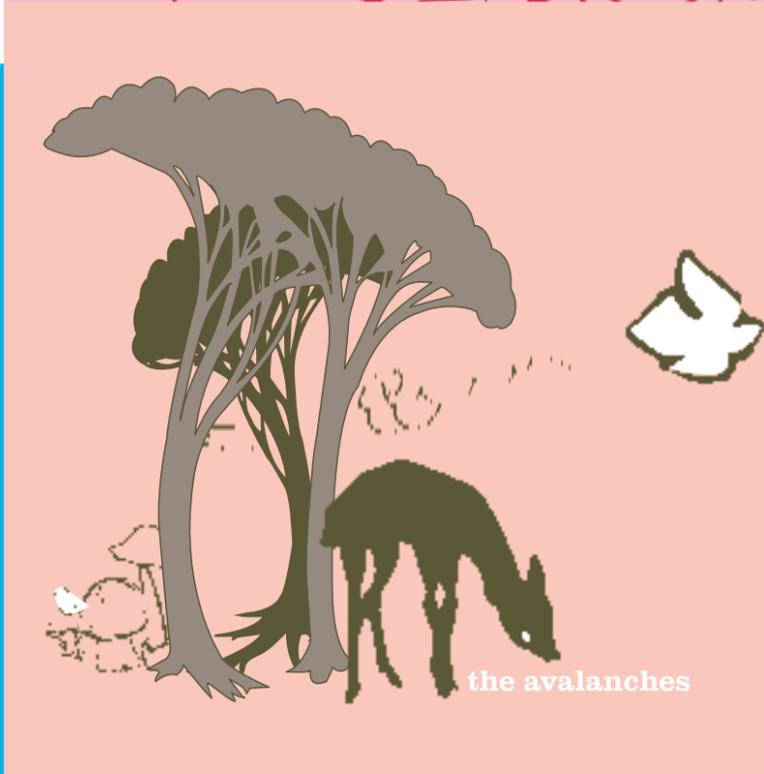
BO: I'm not sure if there's an Australian look, but maybe an approach—it's pretty easy-going here. People are open to new ideas and will support them if they're into it. Australia is also very multi-cultural, and I think that helps towards creating interesting ideas and being open-minded.

XLR8R: Do you feel at all isolated in Australia? Does it affect your work?

BO: I think you can feel isolated living here, but a lot less in the past few years. Email helps. I travel a lot, and I think if you live here and do what I do then it's important to travel and see stuff and meet people. I think it affects my work, but in a good way. Melbourne has an amazing quality of living, and it's such a good place to work. It's nice to go overseas and have a crazy time and see lots of cool things, and then come back here and relax, and take it all in and get lots of work done.

XLR8R: Anywhere else you'd rather live?

BO: For a long time I was busting to live somewhere else, mostly New York, LA or Tokyo, but now, as long as I get to travel, I'm pretty content here.



" FOR A LONG TIME I WAS BUSTING TO LIVE SOMEWHERE ELSE, MOSTLY NEW YORK, LA OR TOKYO, BUT NOW, AS LONG AS I GET TO TRAVEL, I'M PRETTY CONTENT HERE. "



TBC '93 TIL INFINITY

LIKE SO MANY PRODUCTIONS THAT AROSE IN THE ARTISTIC BOOM OF THE EARLY '90S, *XLR8R* TURNS 10 THIS YEAR. INDEED WE WERE BORN IN GOOD COMPANY, AS BROOKLYN-BASED WRITER JON WELDON KEENLY OBSERVES. SO, WHAT DO ALL THESE YEARS HAVE TO SAY FOR THEMSELVES?

Has it come to this—in just 10 years?

Like an overwhelming surge of electricity about to blow the circuit, 1993 heralded an energy and feeling that was anxiously wide open. As usual, music—albums and singles—and other media chart recent history better than an encyclopedia could. While Souls of Mischief envisioned '93 *Til Infinity*, Dignable Planets saw us *Reachin'* (A *New Refutation Of Space And Time*) and German industrialists Einstürzende Neubauten proposed a clean-slate-like *Tabula Rasa*, junglist badboys Congo Natty just called it "Code Red."

Then there's the exhilarating schizophrenic insanity—*Big Time Sensuality* for Björk, "Insane in the Brain" for Cypress Hill, *Angst* for KMFDM, "Surrender" for junglist MBeat—but also the enrapturing escape: *The Chronic* for Dr. Dre, "Music" for LTJ Bukem, a *Buhloone Mindstate* for De La Soul. You can sense it, everyone is both bored and excited: bored by the '80s and excited about the millennium, bored by a war fought on TV but excited about the technology that presents it. With six million ways to die and fly, space and time has never been this compressed, leaving us to fear and yearn for the future that is now.

Picture 1993: globalization is upon us, and the world is about to be connected. Mosaic has just been launched, running a stunning 200 web servers and transferring graphics at a blazing 14 kilobytes per second. Cell phones are still cellular, heavy like a brick and too expensive to be on every street corner, but soon to be digitized. And computers zoom at 20 MHz, before DOS efx become obsolete. The fantastic violence of *Desert Storm* remains just a cloudy video game, as does Rodney King and the riots.

But as things get increasingly virtual, the ghetto keeps it real, connected through their own webs. Black British intellectual Paul Gilroy writes in '93 that the Black Atlantic has become a web of diasporic movement, from Africa to America, from Jamaica to the UK, and in '93, from ghetto to ghetto—New York to Kingston, Kingston to London, London to New York. Pirate radio stations like DonFM and KoolFM form an invisible cloak across a London overloaded by ecstasy and beats-per-minute.

In New York, where about 362 violent crimes occur each day, the Wu-Tang Clan explodes with a nine-man lyrical assault, Inspectah Deck demanding to "catch the blast of a hype verse" while RZA's 36 chambers of doom capture sonic paranoia, the same

paranoia that DJ Muggs conjures through the seething buzz of "I Wanna Get High," the same paranoia in jungle's dangerous bass—all dark ambient ooze. Black Moon's Buckshot is "spitting words like an automatic weapon" while Das EFX and the Fu-Schickens' words are on auto-fire: "Shippity bop, well hot diggity, where's the iggity, the bum siggity," spits Crazy Drazzy on "Baknaffek". But ragga junglists like Demolition Man on Prizma's "Fire" flip it even quicker—"Dis a di very very fast tongue mouth a mouth/ me-di me-di mek mi come fi chat 'bout/ riddim pon di riddim pon di riddim pon di riddim"—but only to match jungle's flying drums. Real gunshots trigger showers of drums on Congo Natty's monstrous "Code Red," a tune where the drums take the forefront while sirens and bass form the matrix that holds them, and the disembodied ragga voices, together.

LTJ Bukem revolutionizes the drums a step farther on "Music," digging up an obscure soul break—The Winston's "Amen Brother"—and jacking up its speed into a rolling loop of fluttery percussion. Warm Amens are set in a matrix that's mirrored in the psychedelic ambience of The Orb or an Aphex (AFX) "Analog Bubblebath."

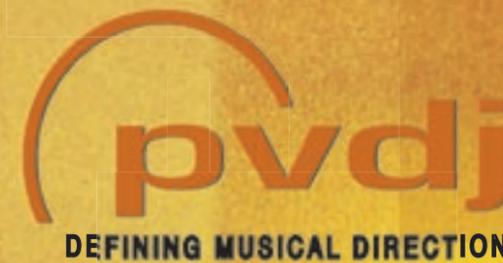
Yet no one sounds as beautifully insane as Björk when she explodes on "Big Time Sensuality," vocal bliss valiantly controlling throbbing techno-house. Somehow, her vocals match the horn walls found throughout '93 hip-hop (like Black Moon and Souls of Mischief), a wall that sometimes mimics sirens (as it does for Congo Natty or Wu-Tang), or sometimes just cries, like Blixa Bargeld's inhuman wail on Einstürzende Neubauten's "Headcleaner." In fact, Bargeld's painful angst surges throughout a genre peaking in '93—industrial. Nine Inch Nails have *Broken* and been *Fixed* while Ministry, already sensing webby amalgamation, demanded '92 that we "connect the goddamn dots!"

As voices and drums are foregrounded, wailing and ambience become the matrix, the body with which to hold the nodes together, the connection, just like the mosaic-soon-to-be-internet, just like the pages of *XLR8R* do for a handful—soon to be hundreds—of dance music splinters. Maybe '93 was the year that made pomo no mo', as invisible matrices bear new narratives of compressed time and space, trying to hold it all together but leaving voids of virtual bliss. Whatever—as the Wu said back then, "Bring tha moth-erfuckin' ruckus!" Ninety-three: it was a good year, promising much more.

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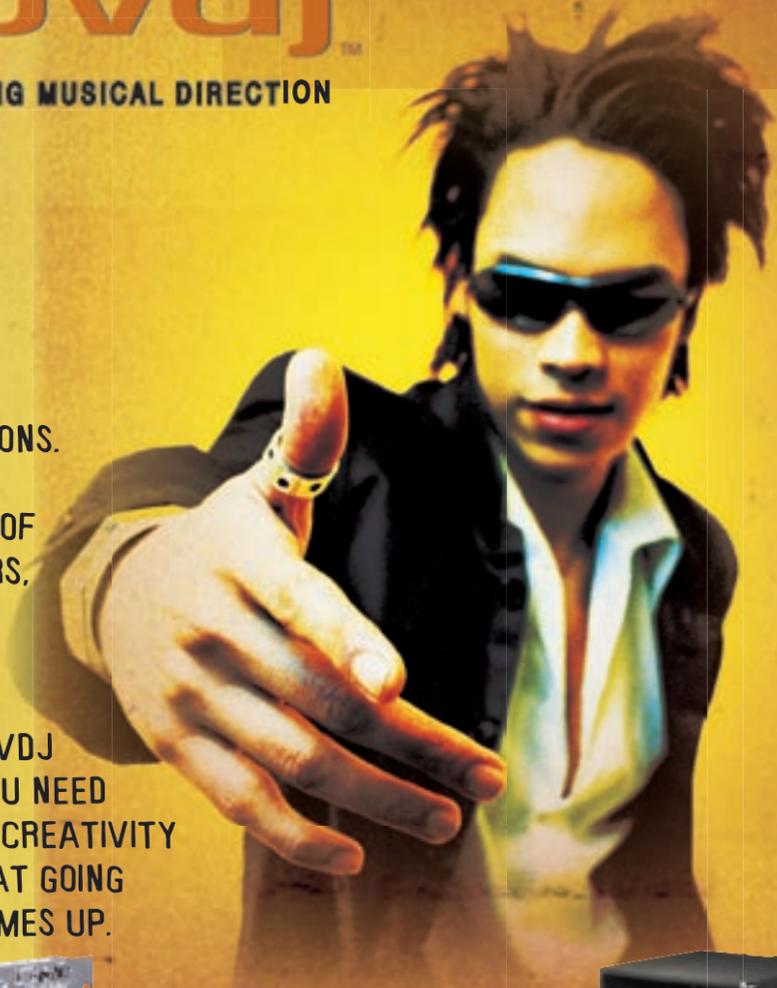
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